KAMOME SHIRAHAMA
Witch Hat Atelier
VOLUME
13

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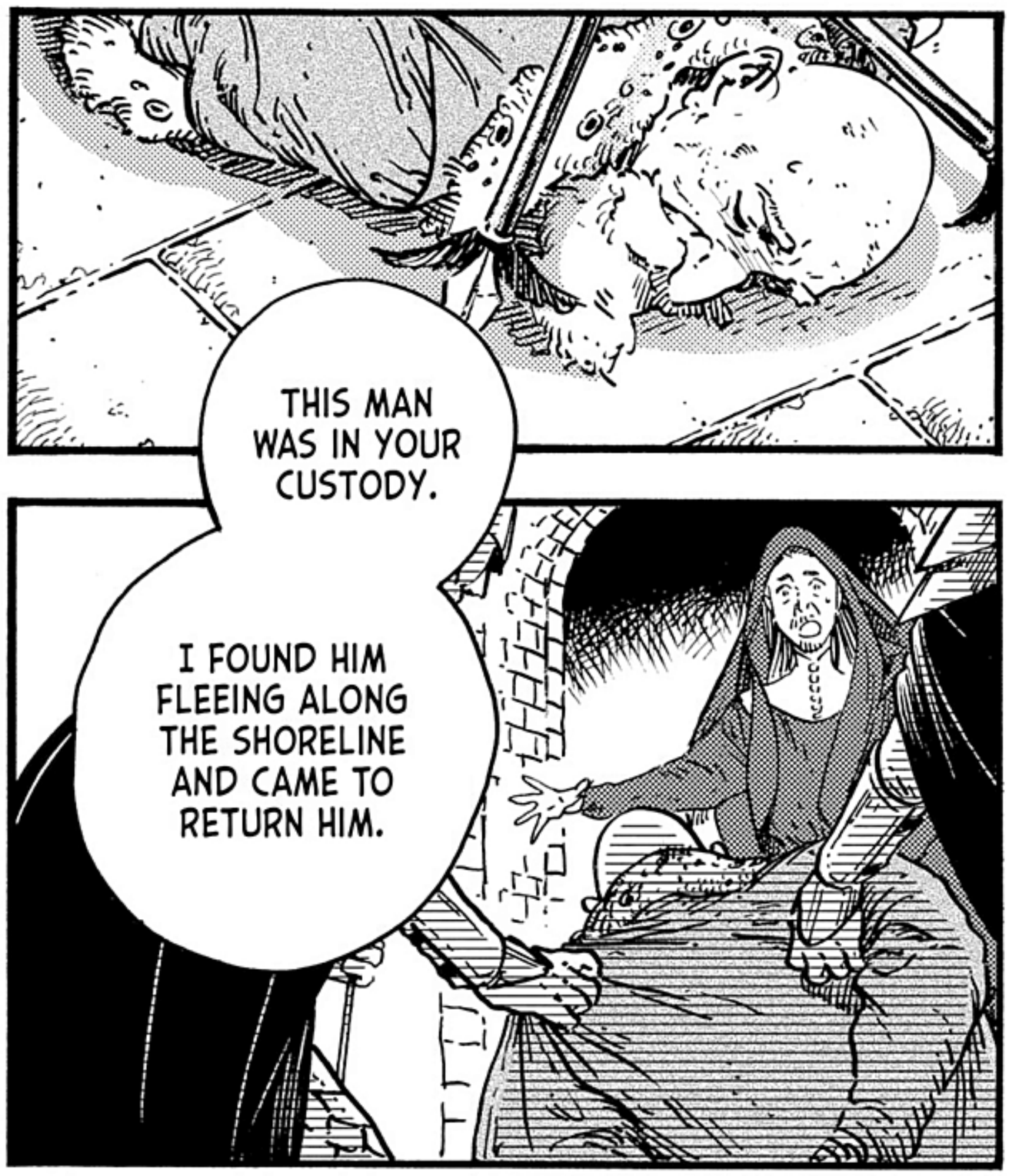
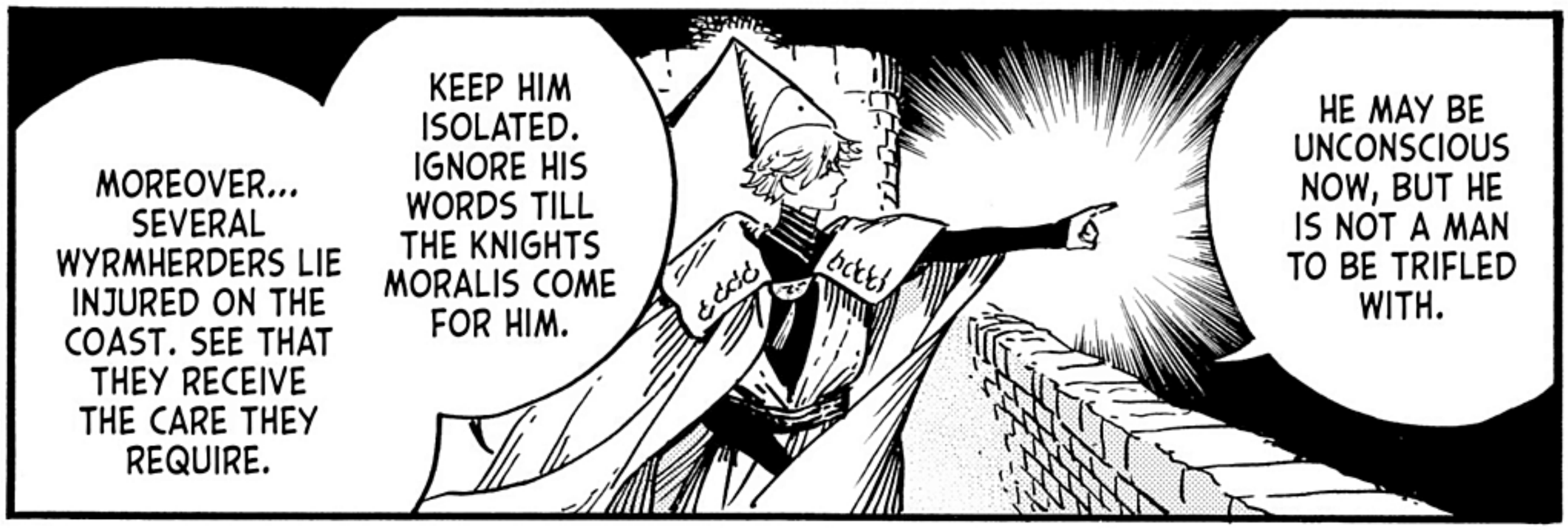
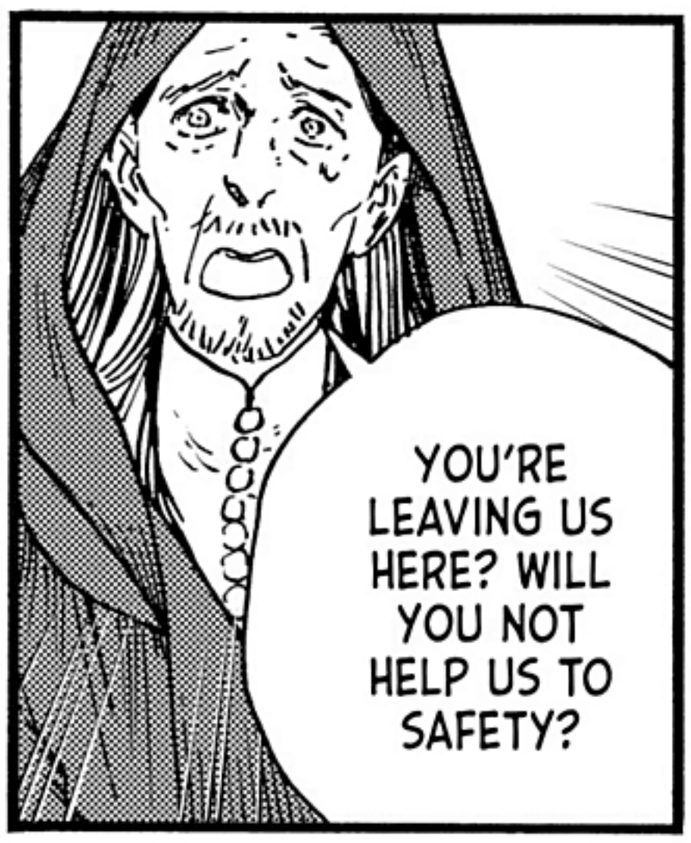
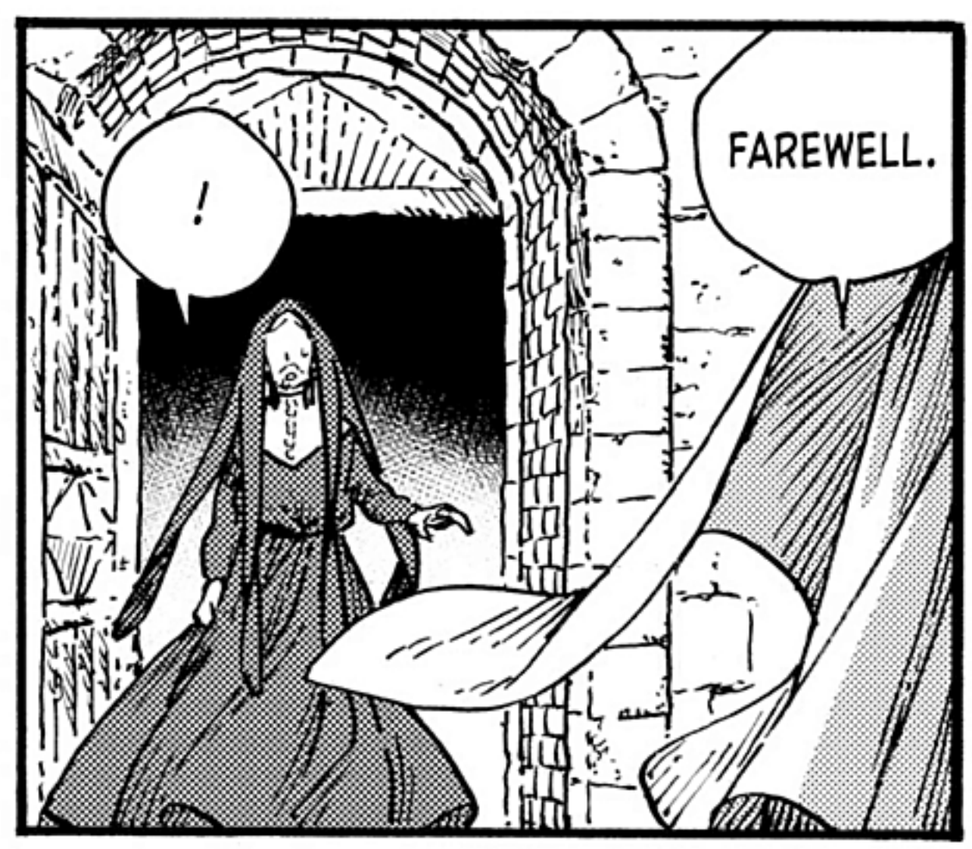

THIS MAN WAS IN YOUR CUSTODY.
I FOUND HIM FLEEING ALONG THE SHORELINE AND CAME TO RETURN HIM.

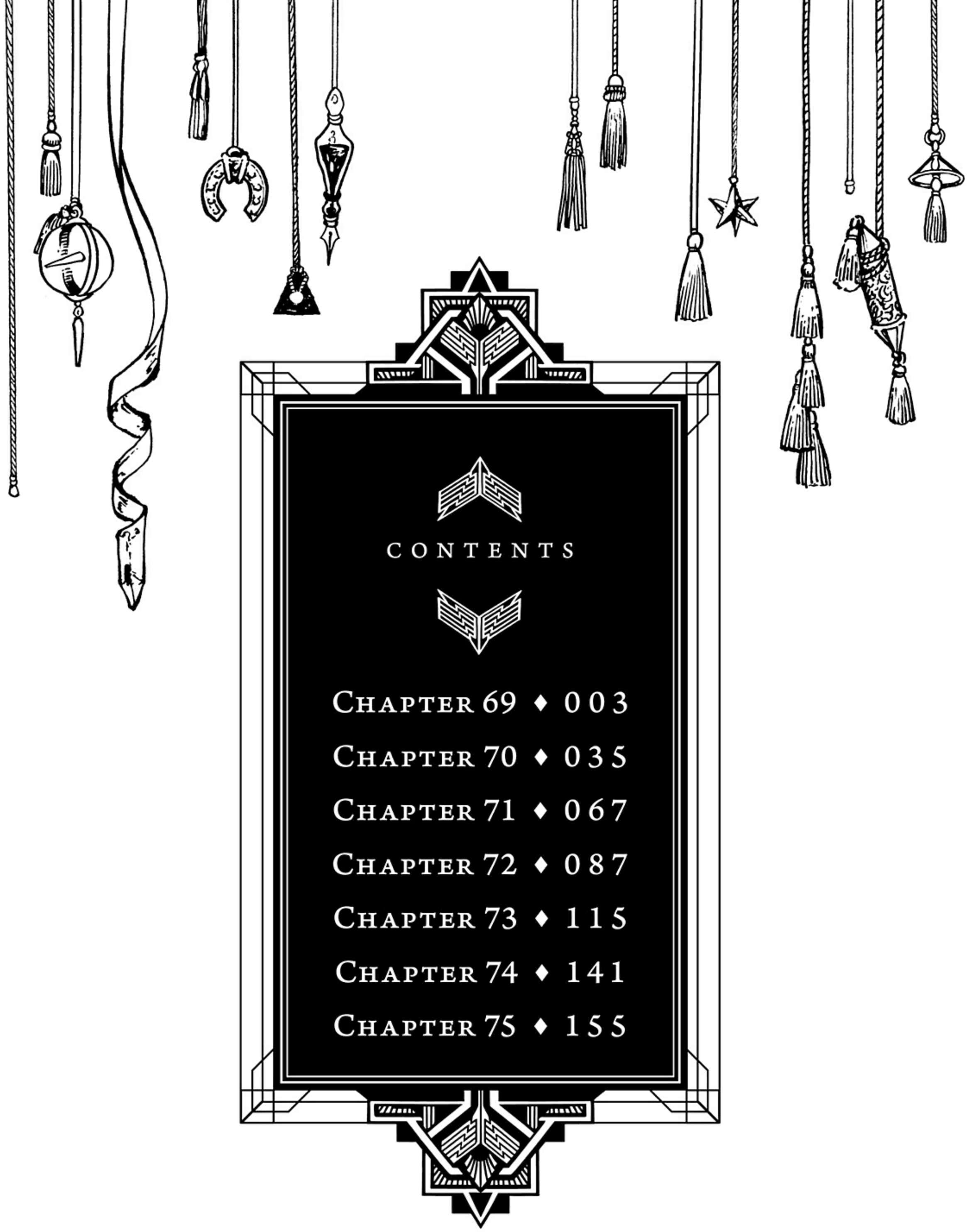
FWMP


MOREOVER... SEVERAL WYRMHERDERS LIE INJURED ON THE COAST. SEE THAT THEY RECEIVE THE CARE THEY REQUIRE.
KEEP HIM ISOLATED. IGNORE HIS WORDS TILL THE KNIGHTS MORALIS COME FOR HIM.
HE MAY BE UNCONSCIOUS NOW, BUT HE IS NOT A MAN TO BE TRIFLED WITH.


YOU'RE LEAVING US HERE? WILL YOU NOT HELP US TO SAFETY?

W...
WAIT!


!
FAREWELL.



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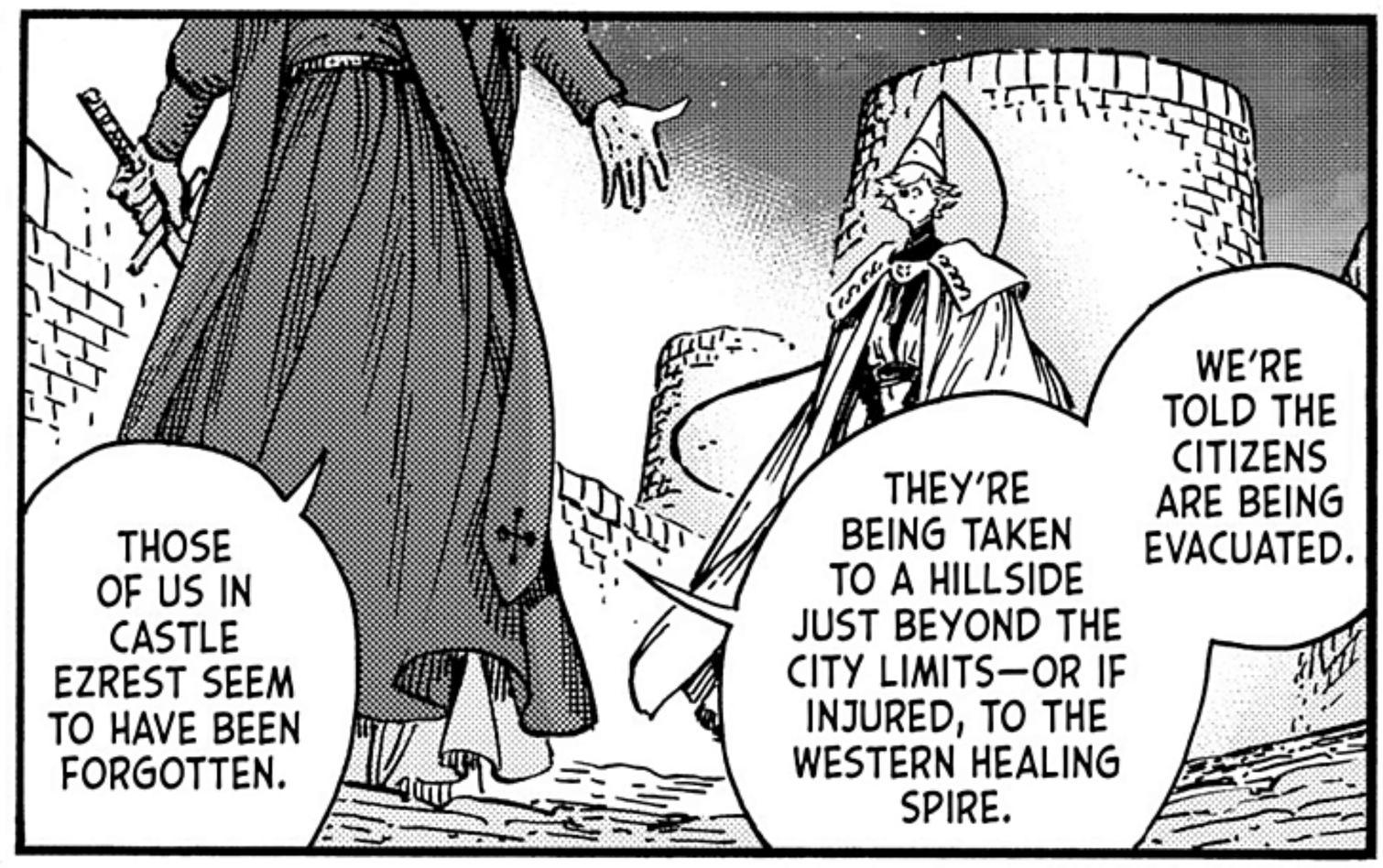
WITCH HAT ATELIER

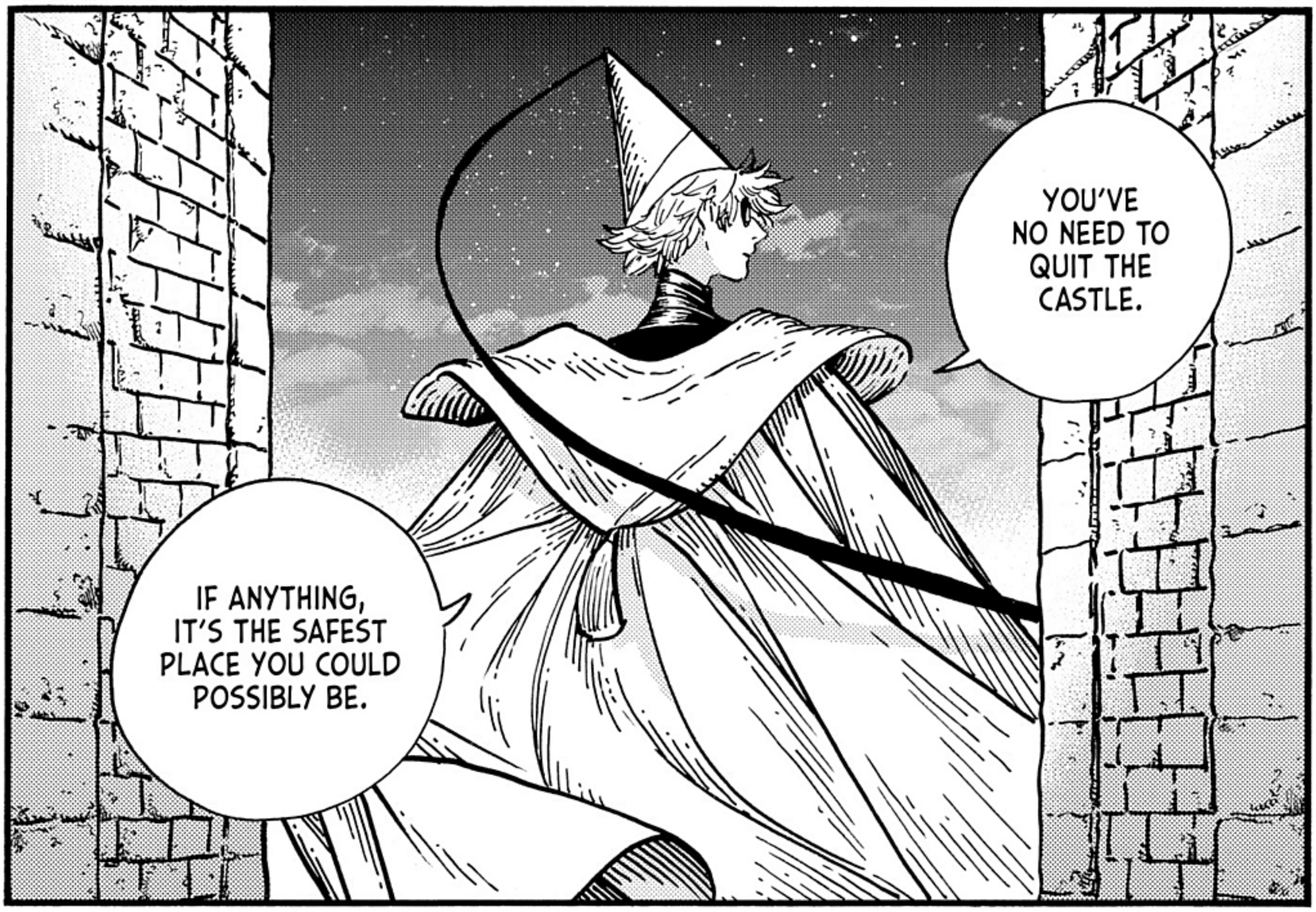
♦

KAMOME SHIRAHAMA

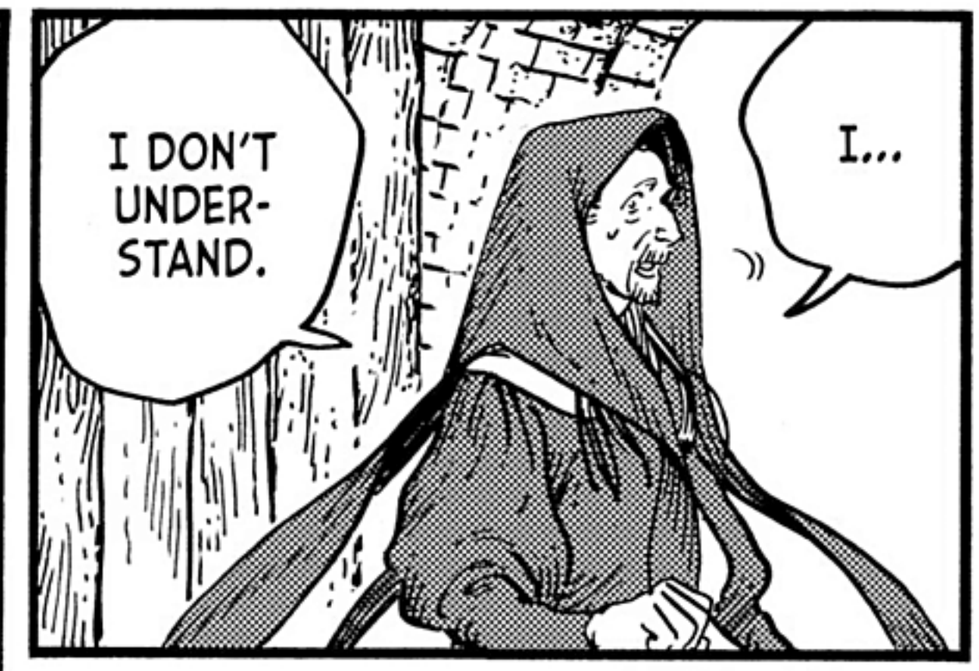
Note: This volume includes a brief, non-graphic depiction of physical abuse of a child in the form of corporal punishment.

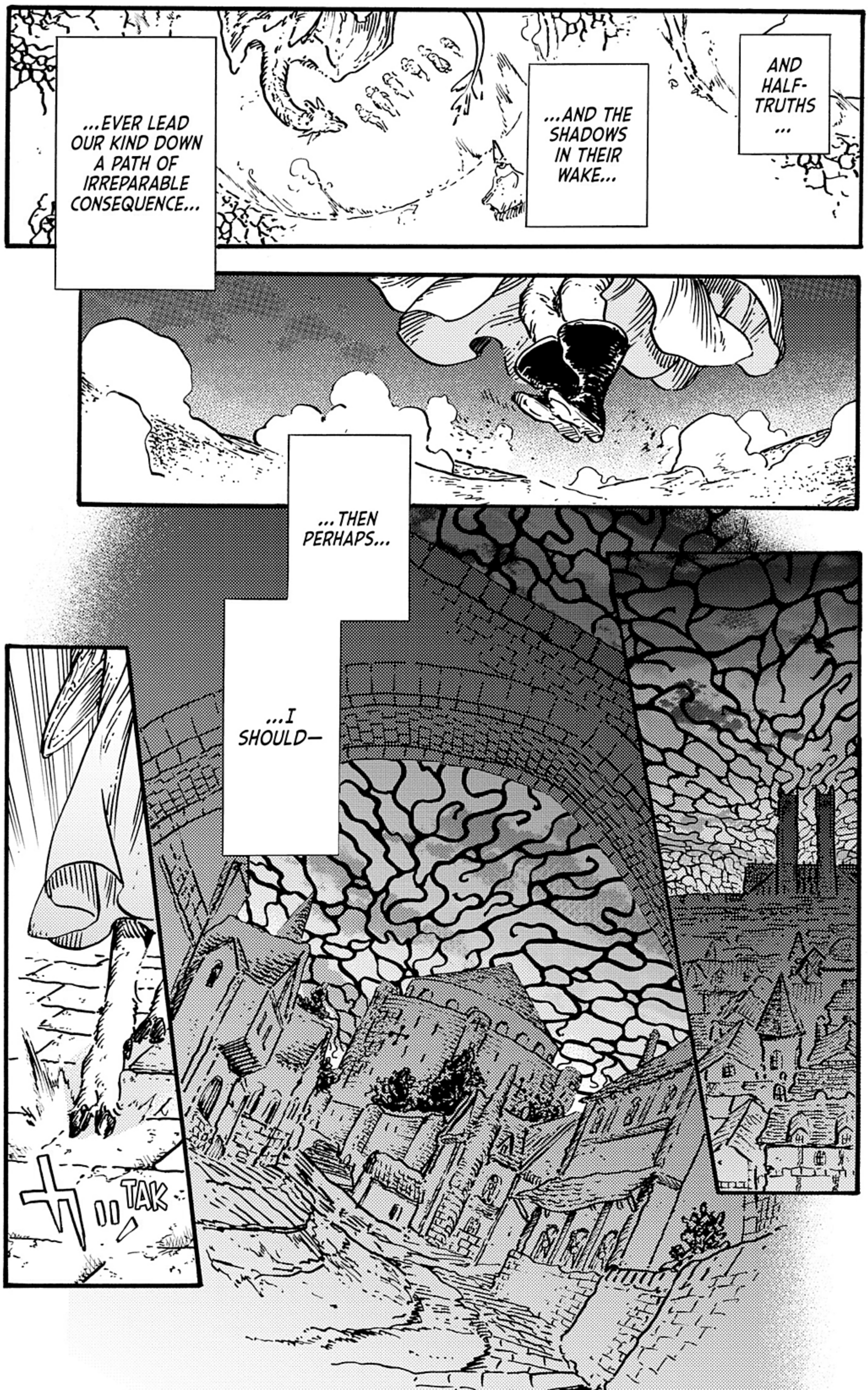
STAY.


THOSE OF US IN CASTLE EZREST SEEM TO HAVE BEEN FORGOTTEN.
THEY'RE BEING TAKEN TO A HILLSIDE JUST BEYOND THE CITY LIMITS—OR IF INJURED, TO THE WESTERN HEALING SPIRE.
WE'RE TOLD THE CITIZENS ARE BEING EVACUATED.


YOU'VE NO NEED TO QUIT THE CASTLE.
IF ANYTHING, IT'S THE SAFEST PLACE YOU COULD POSSIBLY BE.

SIR WITCH!
SIR WITCH...? W... WAIT!

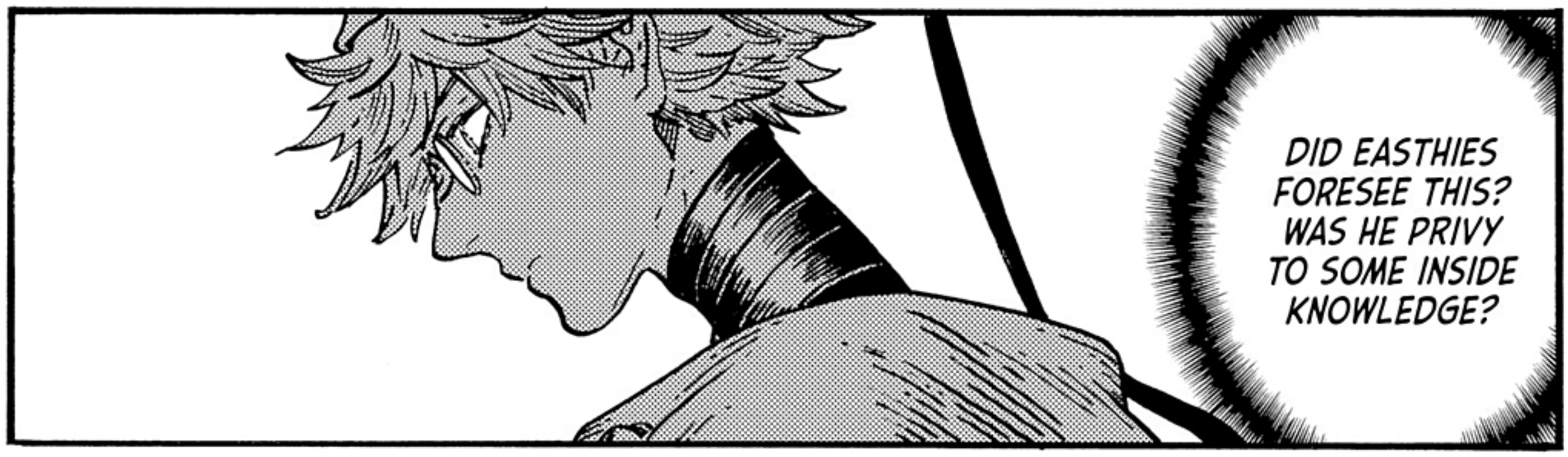

I DON'T UNDER-STAND.
I...

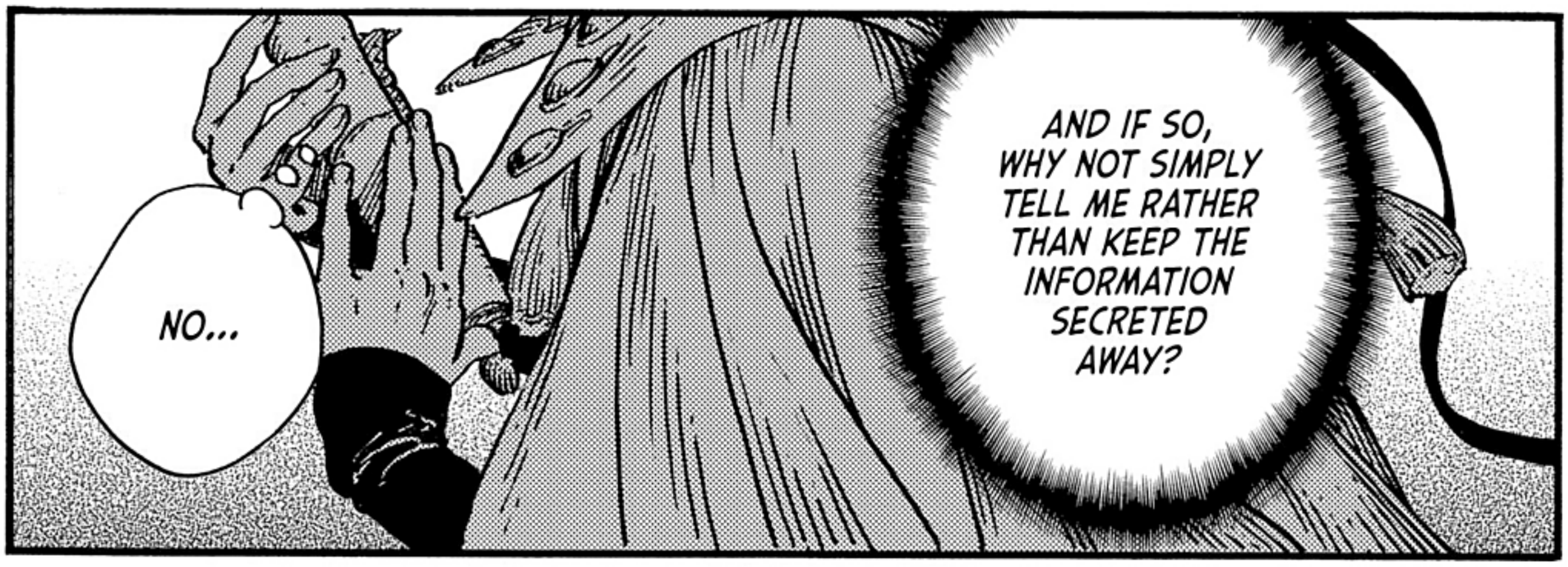

...EVER LEAD OUR KIND DOWN A PATH OF IRREPARABLE CONSEQUENCE...
...AND THE SHADOWS IN THEIR WAKE...
AND HALF-TRUTHS ...
...THEN PERHAPS...
...I SHOULD—
TAK

WH...

WHAT CAN WE DO FOR YOU, SIR WITCH?

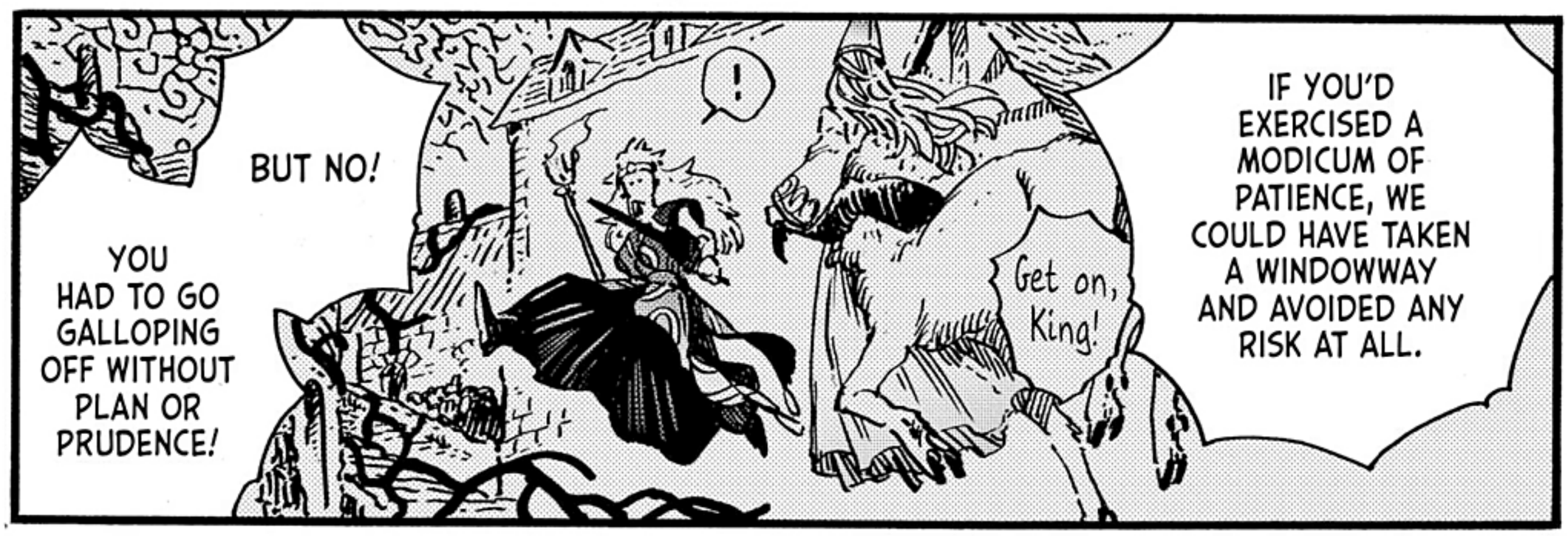
THANK YOU FOR THE RIDE, O WISE ONE!
YOUR FLEET-FOOTED FURNITURE...
...FERRIED US TO THE HEALING SPIRE IN NO TIME AT ALL.
KR-THMP
KRTHMP
ENOUGH OF YOUR BLATH-ERING! DISMOUNT, YOU FOOL!
BAH!
WHO KNOWS WHAT LONG AND ARDUOUS JOURNEY WE'D HAVE OTHERWISE SUFFERED?


DID EASTHIES FORESEE THIS? WAS HE PRIVY TO SOME INSIDE KNOWLEDGE?

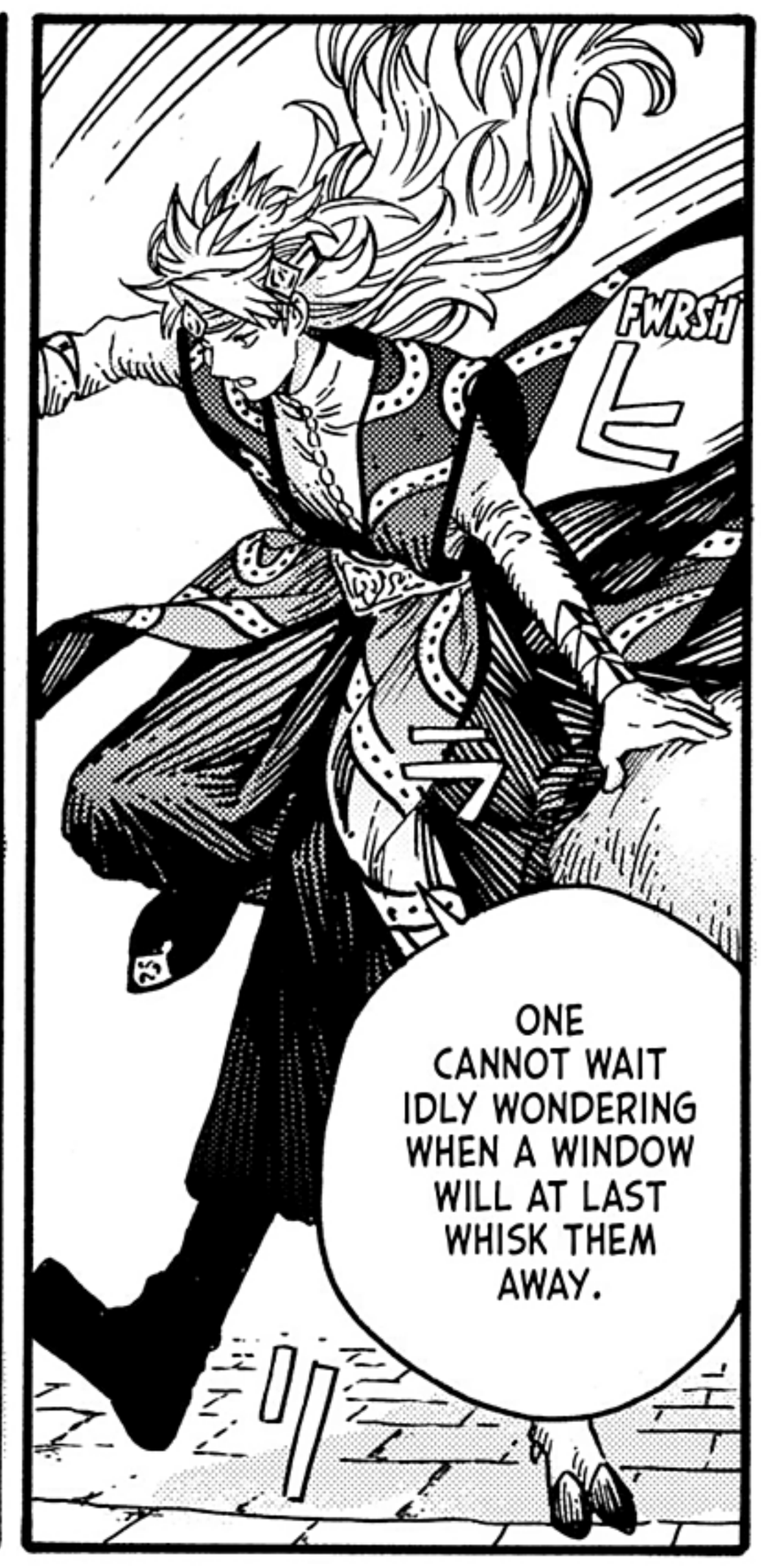

NO...
AND IF SO, WHY NOT SIMPLY TELL ME RATHER THAN KEEP THE INFORMATION SECRETED AWAY?

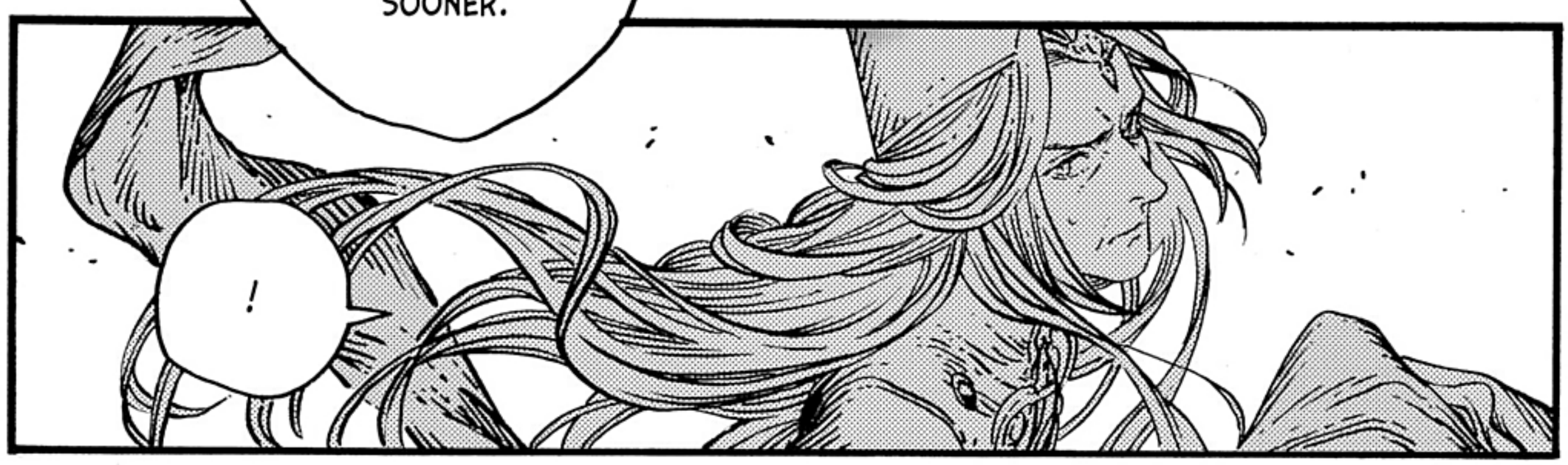
BUT IF SECRETS...

IN THAT REGARD, I SUPPOSE HE'S NO DIFFERENT FROM ANY OTHER WITCH.

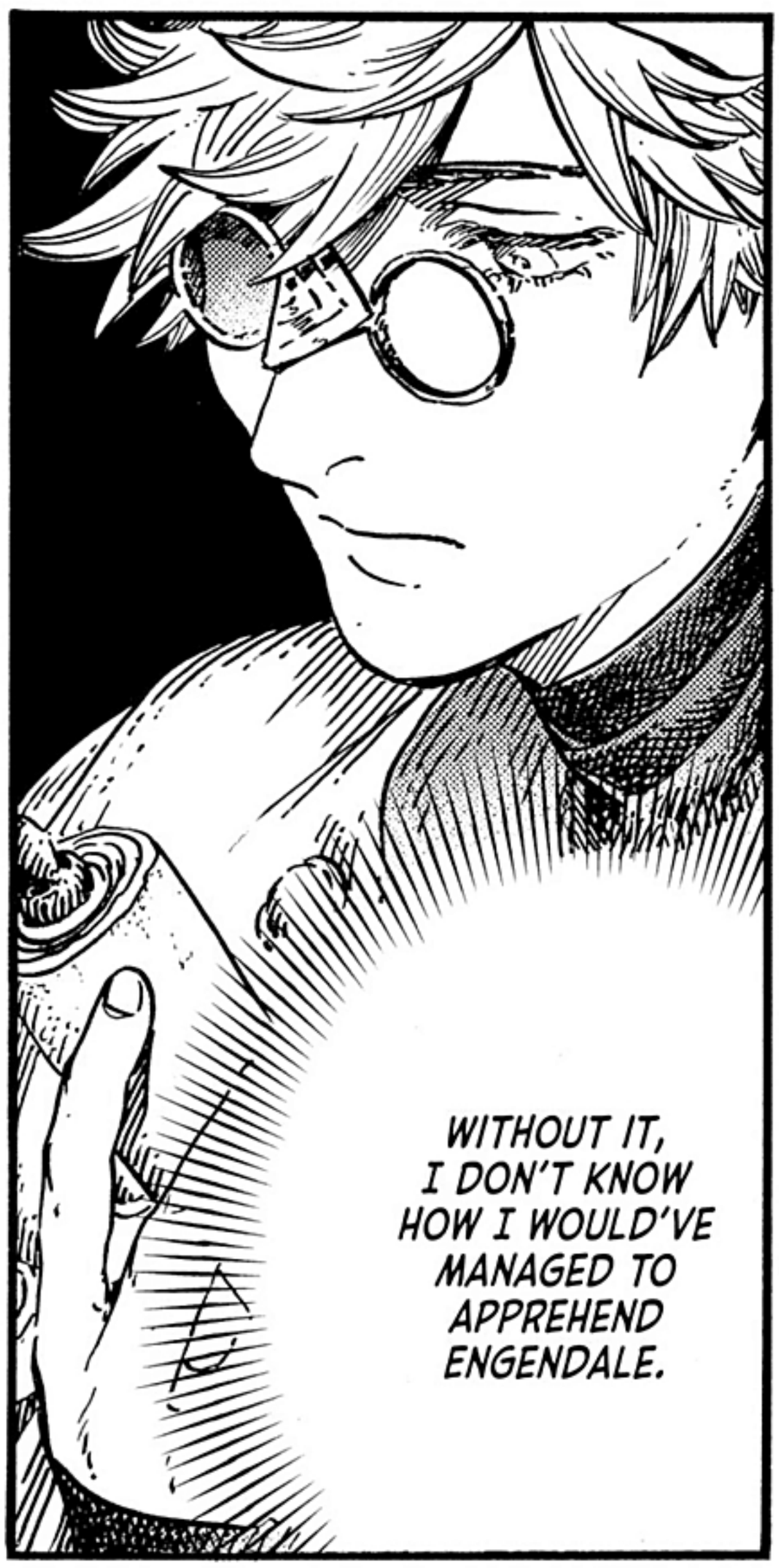

BUT NO!
YOU HAD TO GO GALLOPING OFF WITHOUT PLAN OR PRUDENCE!
!
Get on, King!
IF YOU'D EXERCISED A MODICUM OF PATIENCE, WE COULD HAVE TAKEN A WINDOWWAY AND AVOIDED ANY RISK AT ALL.

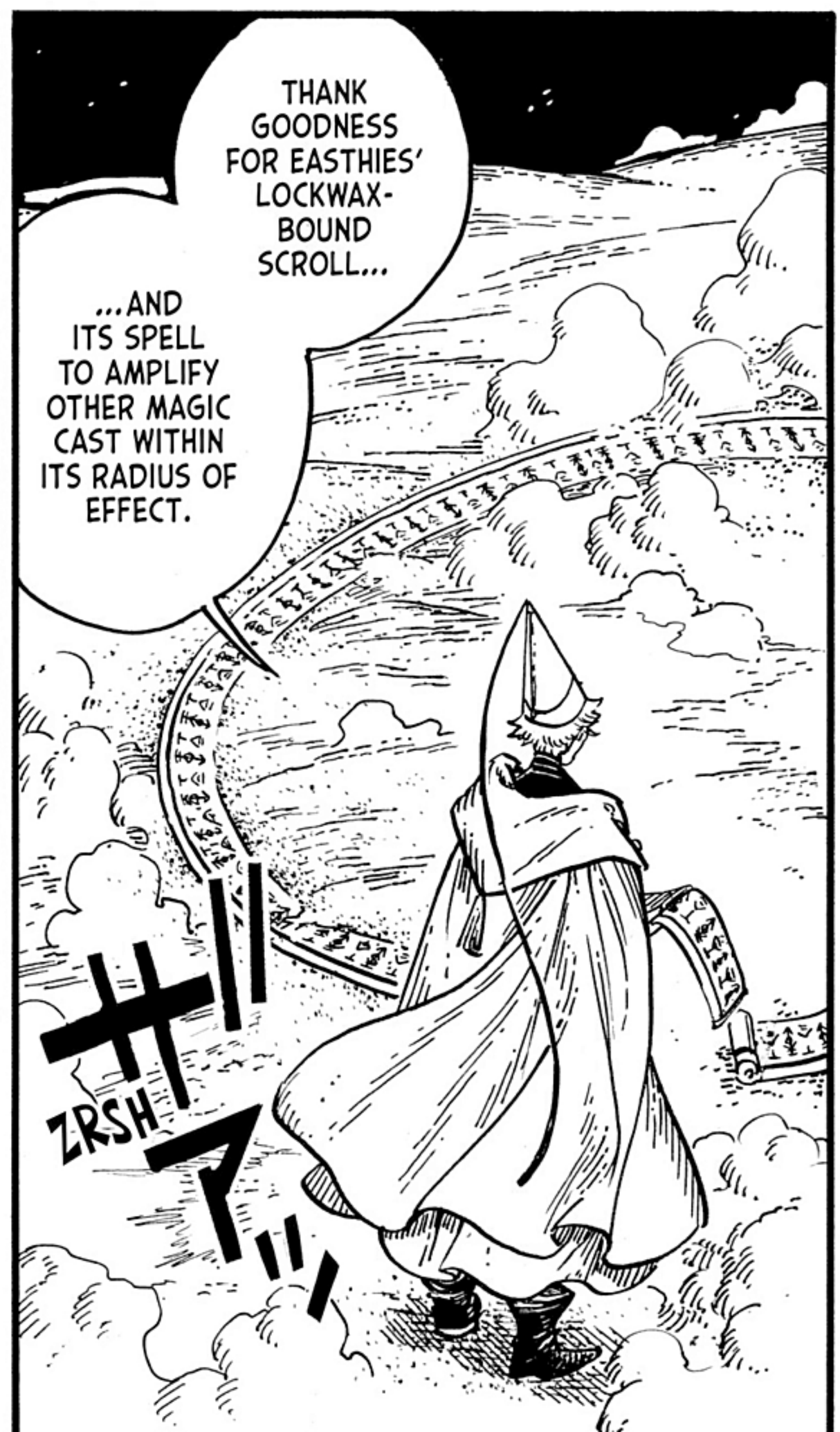
EVERY TICK OF THE CLOCK COSTS ANOTHER LIFE. AND EVEN AMONG THE ONES WE SAVE...
...THERE ARE THOSE WHO WILL FOREVER BEAR THE BURDEN OF THEIR INJURIES BECAUSE WE FAILED TO ACT SOONER.


FWRSH
ONE CANNOT WAIT IDLY WONDERING WHEN A WINDOW WILL AT LAST WHISK THEM AWAY.

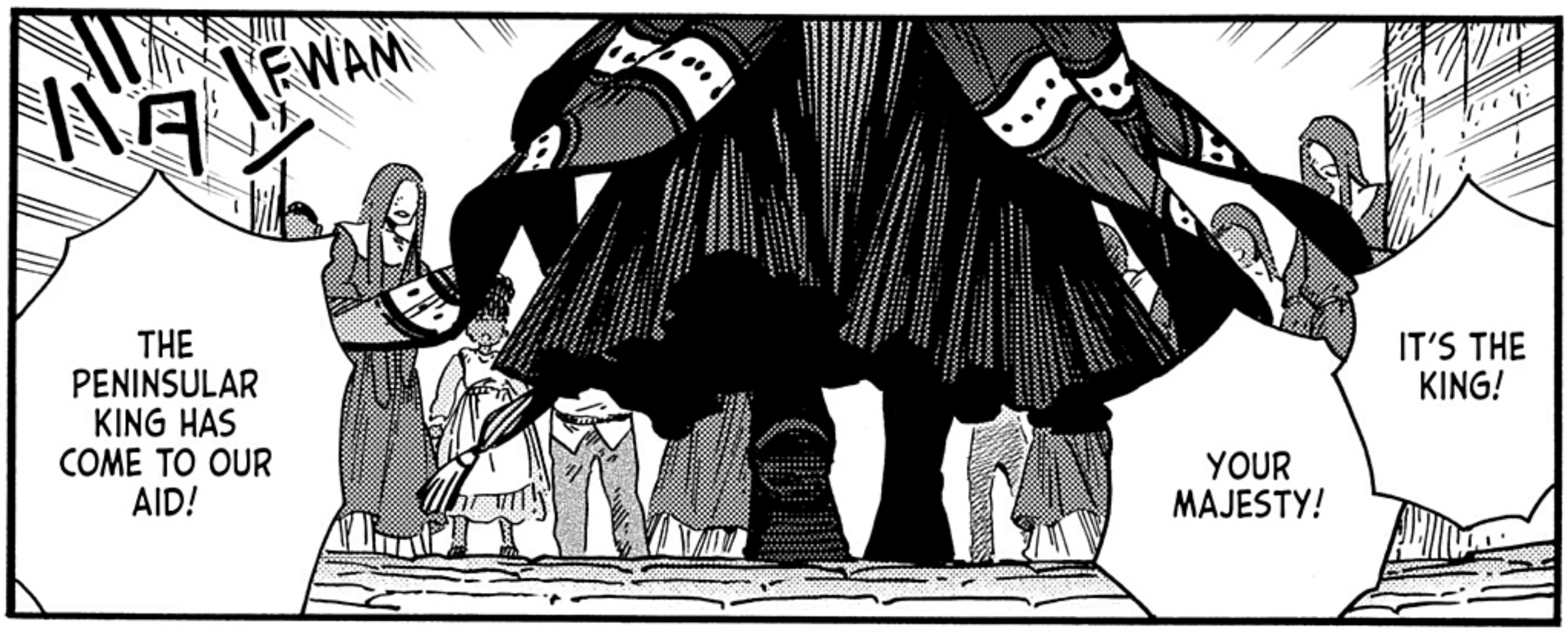

!

SHRRRRRF
ZSH

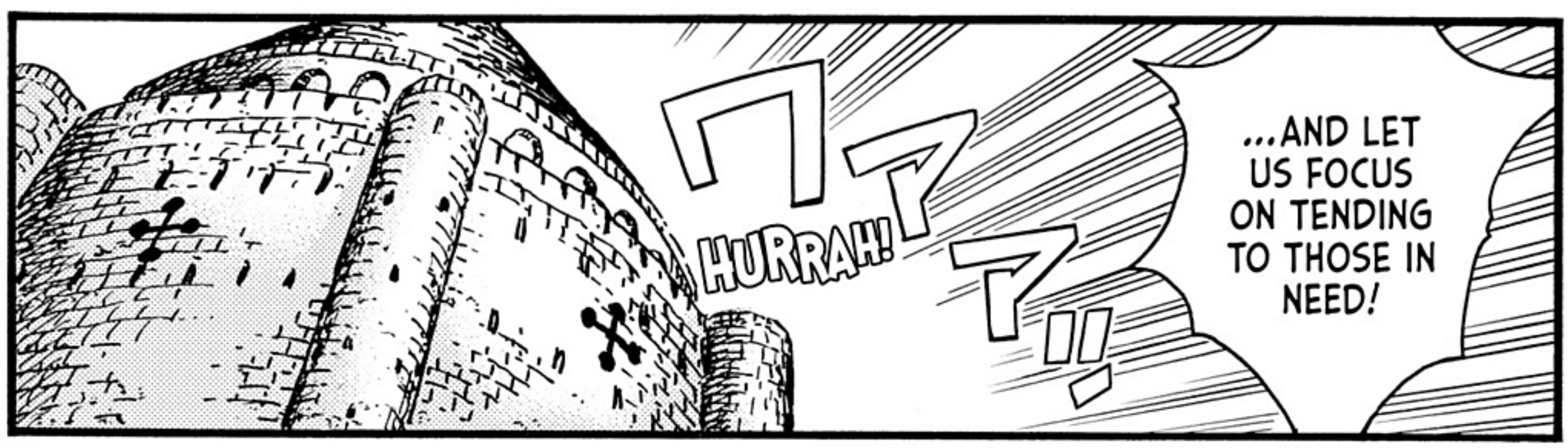

WITHOUT IT, I DON'T KNOW HOW I WOULD'VE MANAGED TO APPREHEND ENGENDALE.

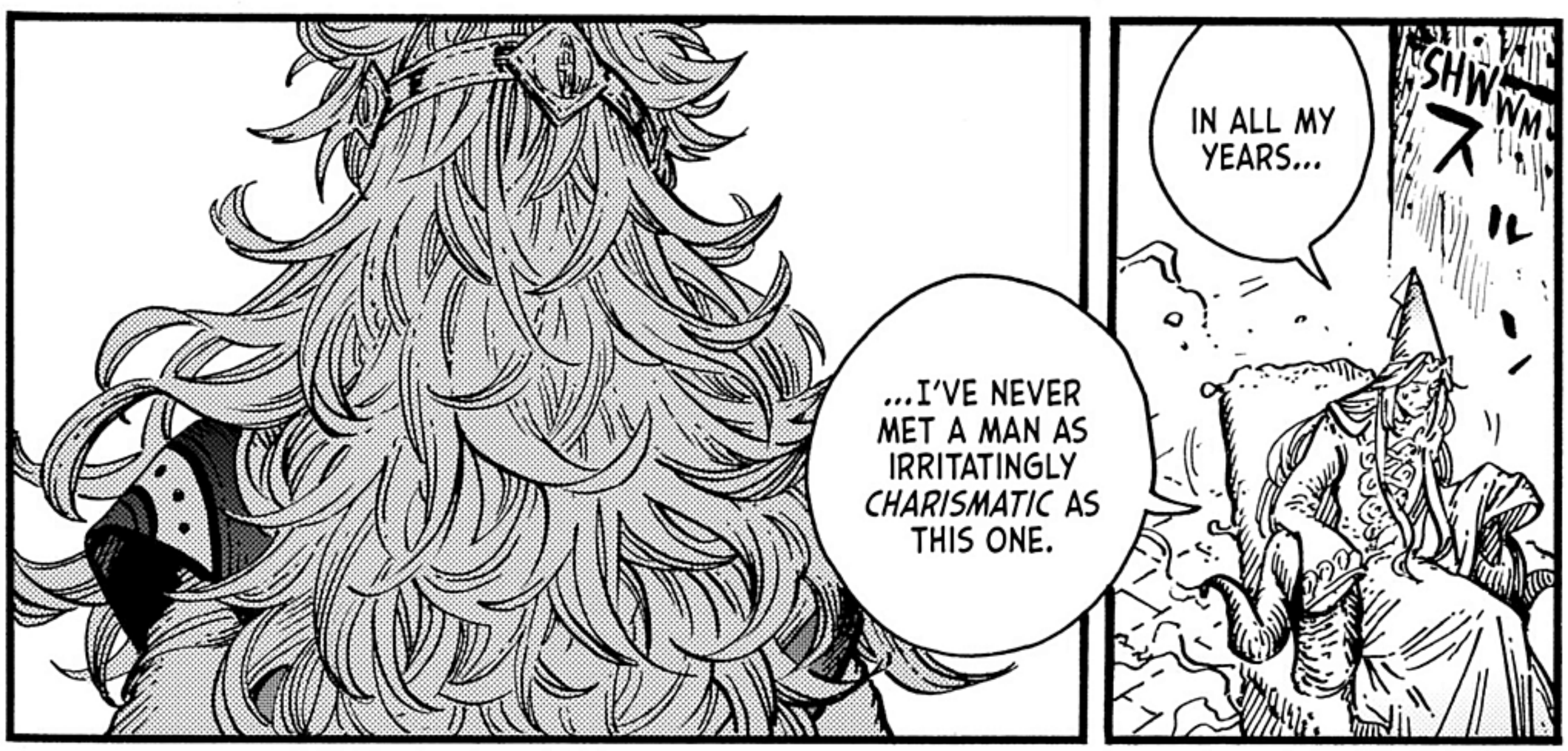

THANK GOODNESS FOR EASTHIES' LOCKWAX-BOUND SCROLL...
...AND ITS SPELL TO AMPLIFY OTHER MAGIC CAST WITHIN ITS RADIUS OF EFFECT.
ZRSH

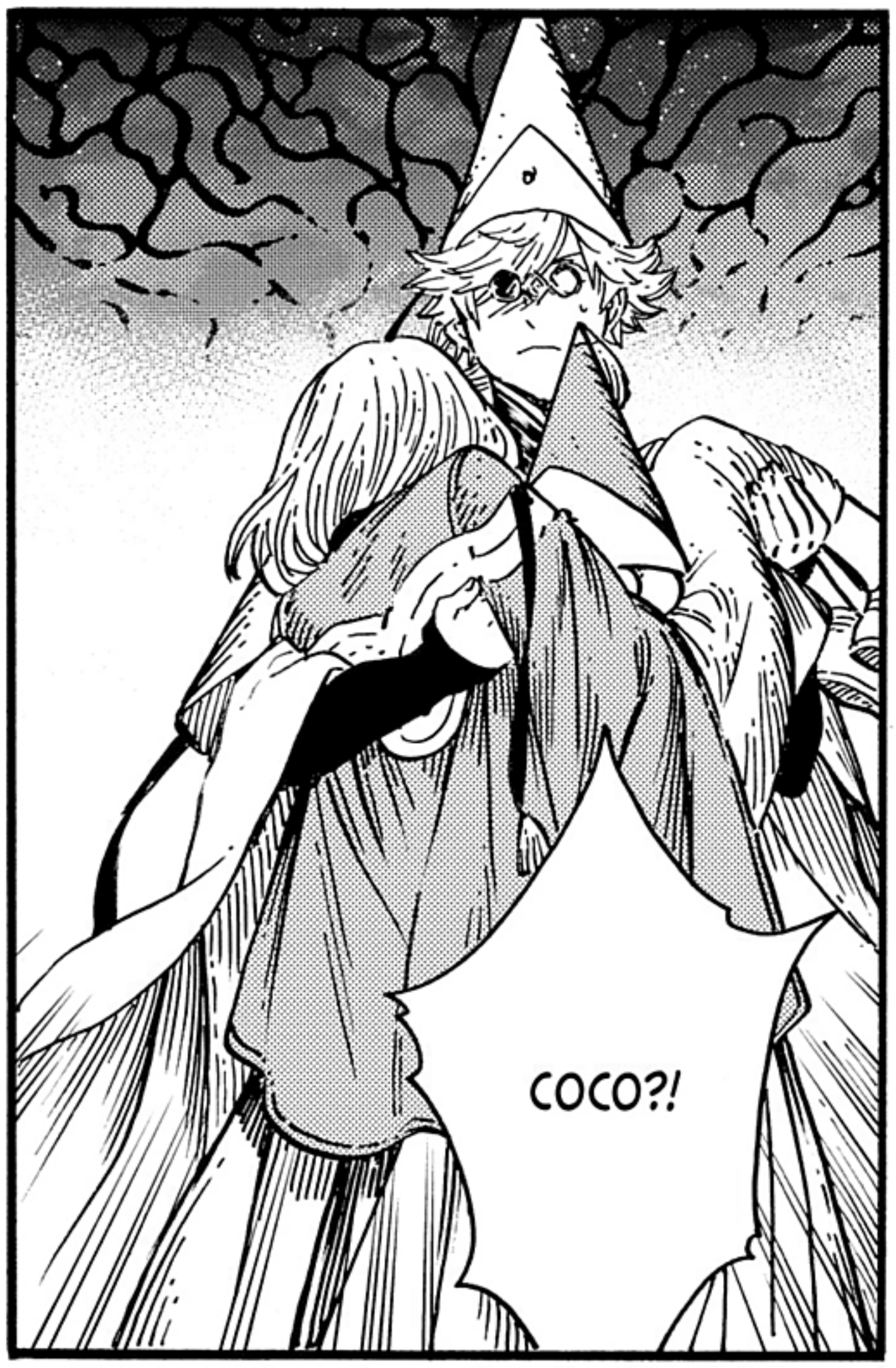
YOU SEE, I AM FOREVER LOCKED IN BATTLE WITHOUT HOPE OF TRIUMPH.



WITH ME IS THE WITCHES' OWN WISE IN TEACHINGS.
AYE, AND IT IS NOT ONLY I.
THANK THE STARS!
HIS BOUNDLESS MAGIC SHALL DRIVE OFF THE LEECH AND BRING SAFETY TO ALL WHO SHELTER WITHIN THIS SPIRE. SO FORGET YOUR FEARS...

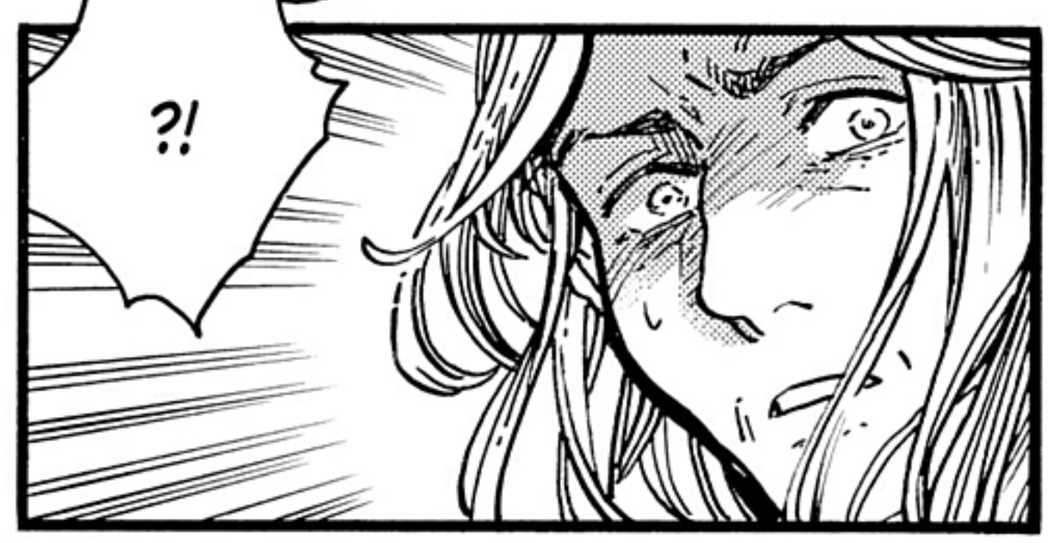

HURRAH!
...AND LET US FOCUS ON TENDING TO THOSE IN NEED!

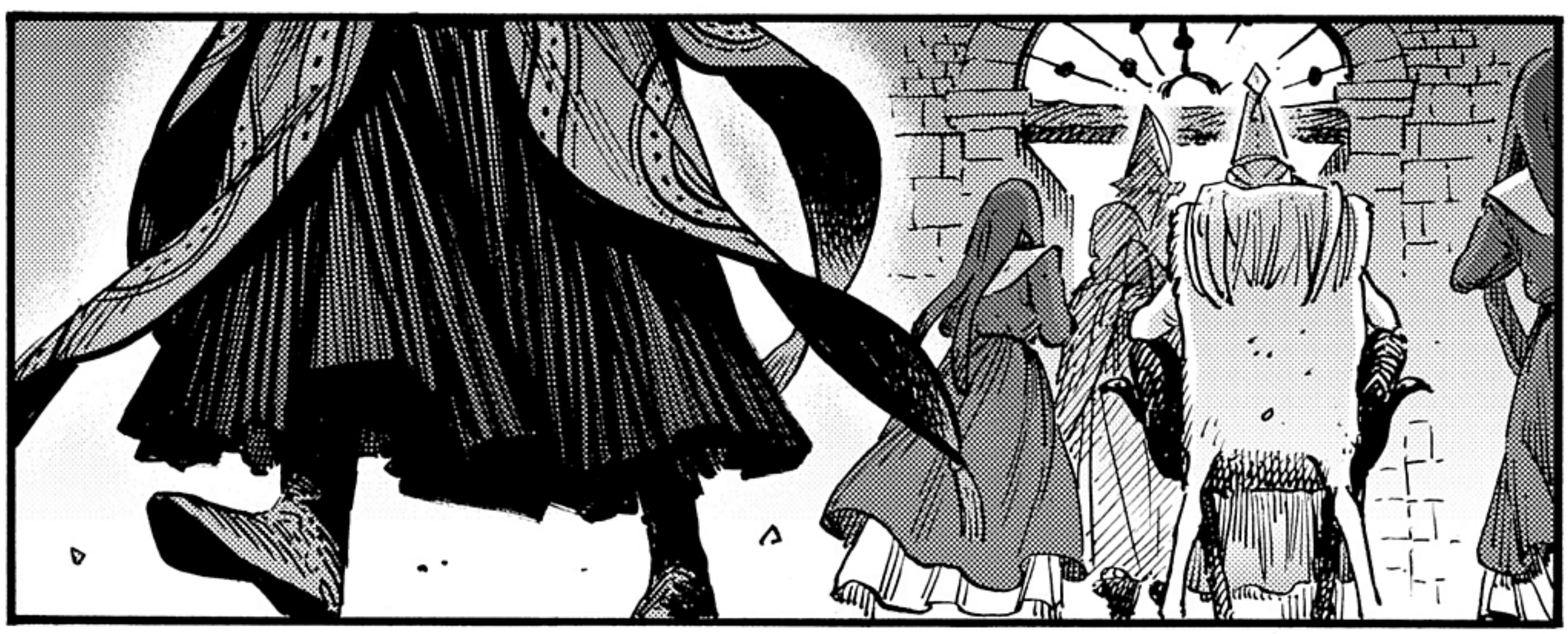

...I'VE NEVER MET A MAN AS IRRITATINGLY *CHARISMATIC* AS THIS ONE.
IN ALL MY YEARS...
SHWWM


COCO?!

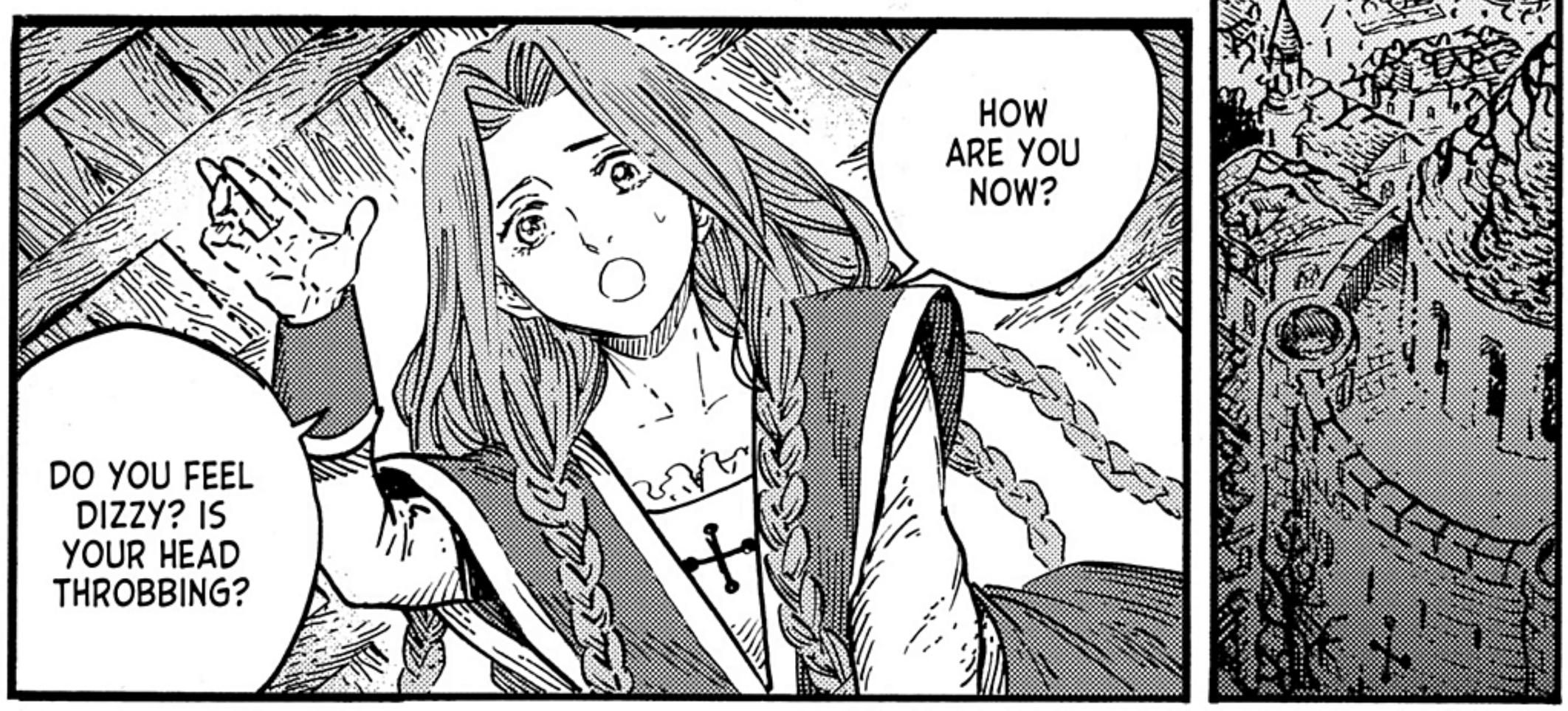
QIFREY? IS THAT YOU?

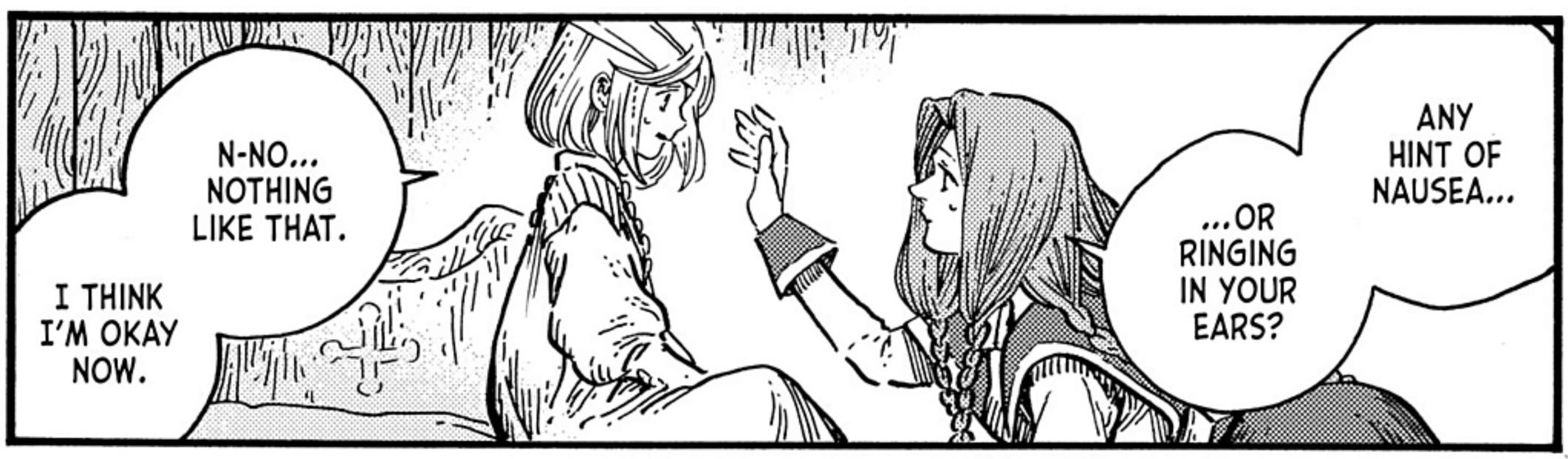
LORD BELDARUIT.

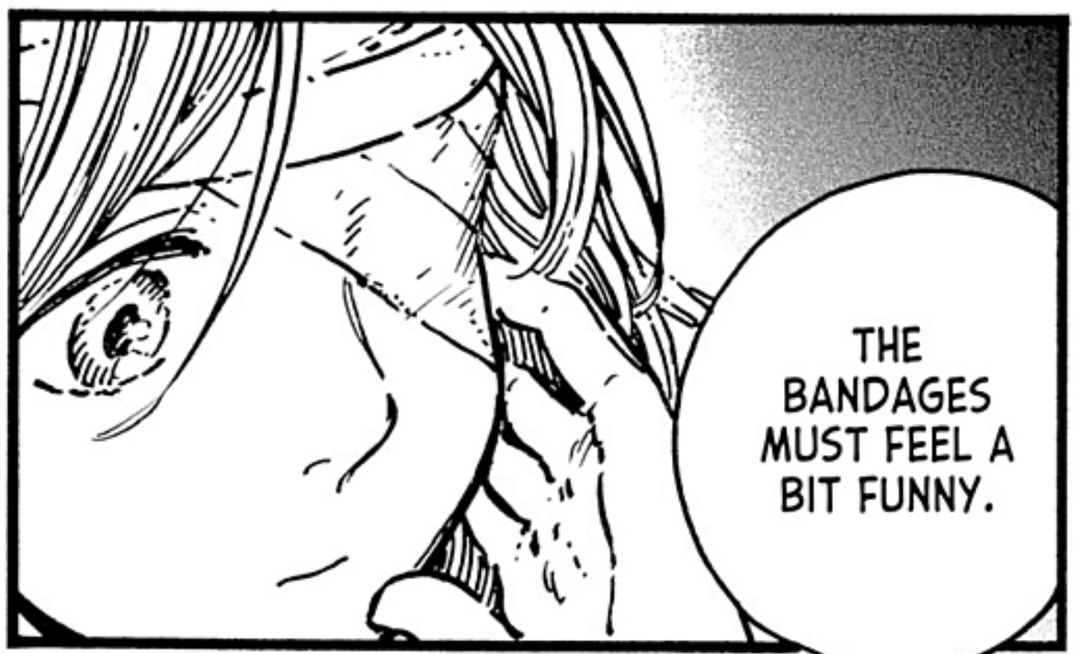

?!

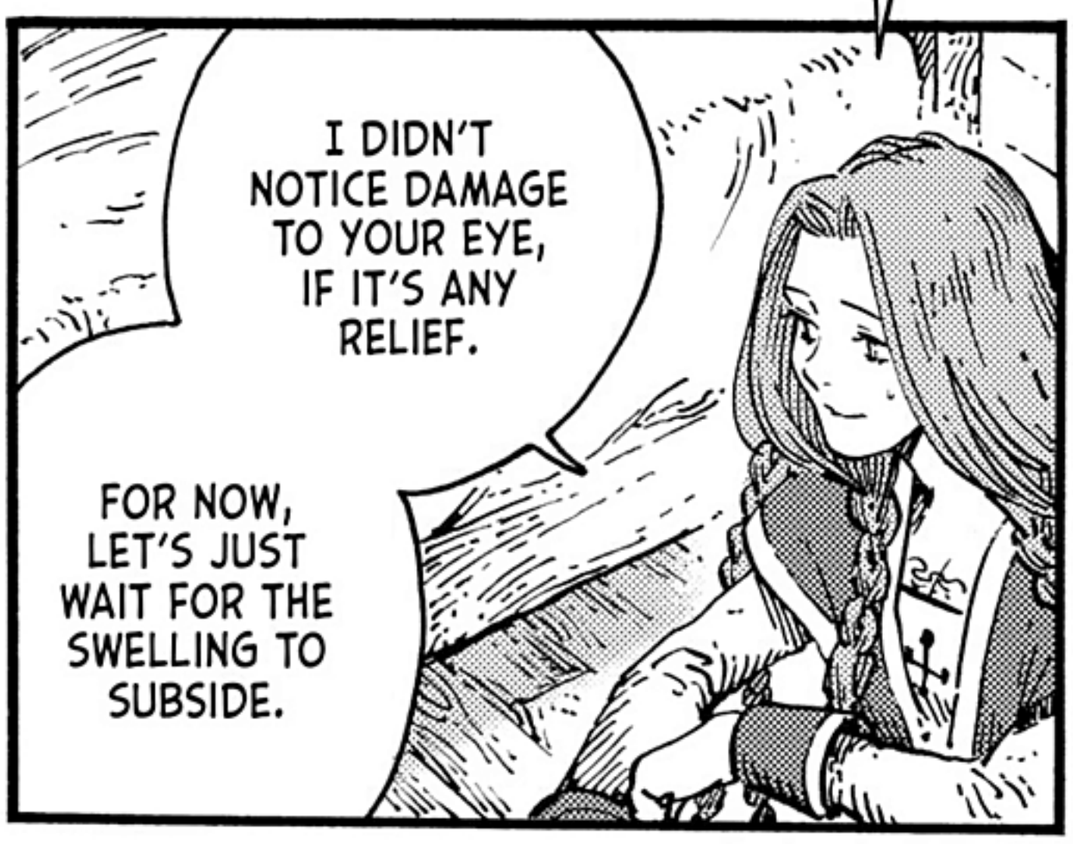


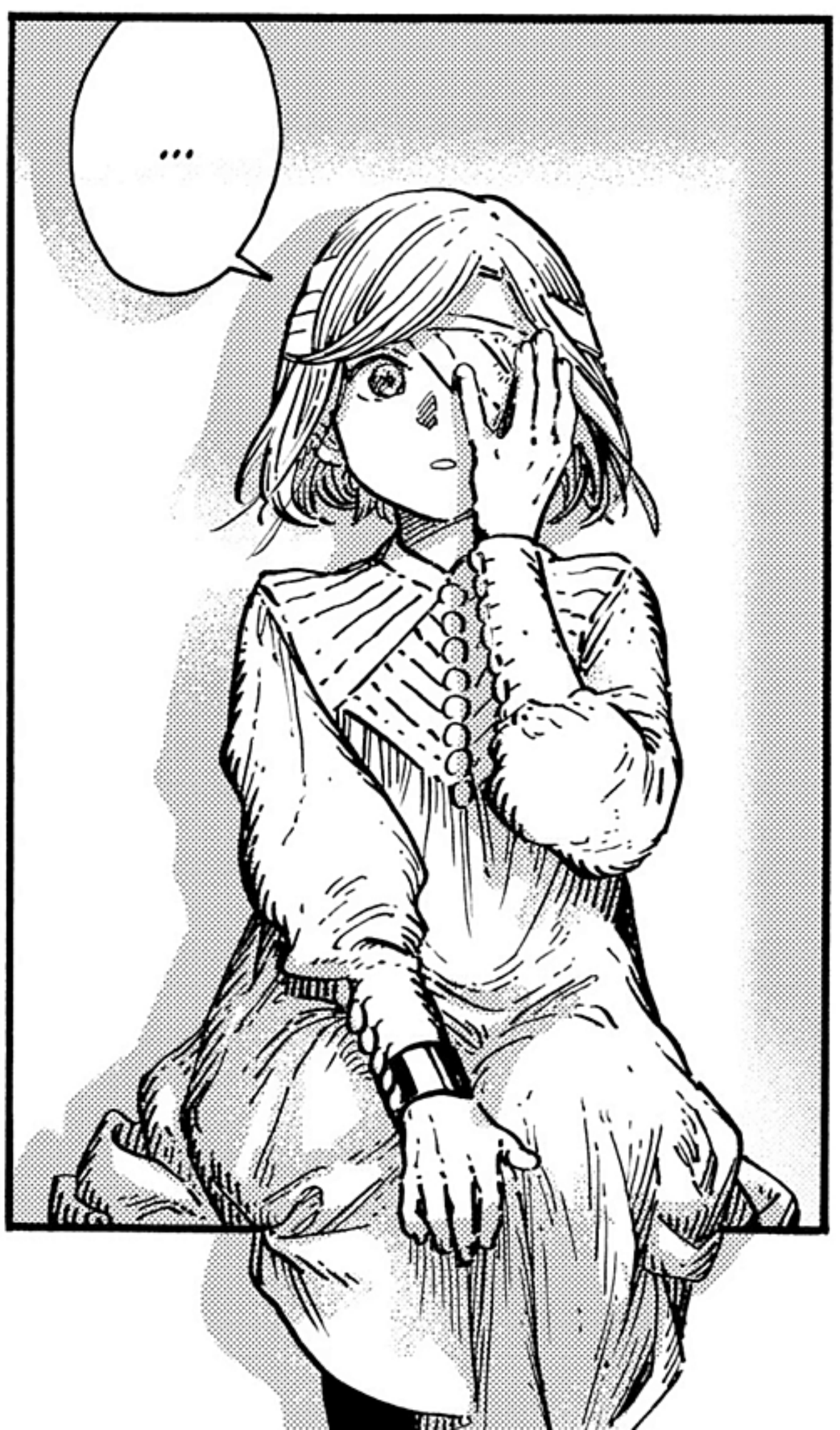
PUWWW...

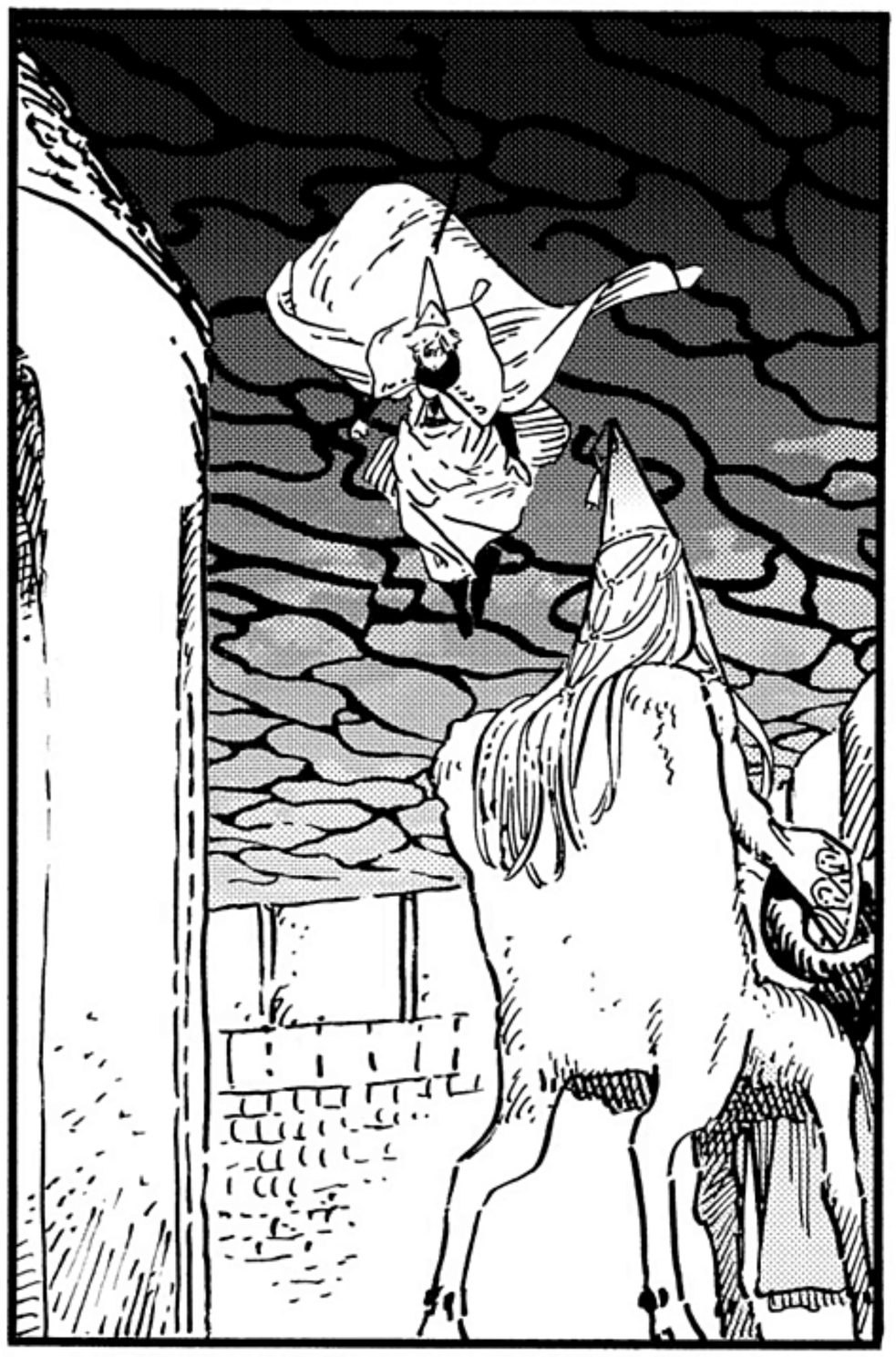

HOW ARE YOU NOW?
DO YOU FEEL DIZZY? IS YOUR HEAD THROBBING?

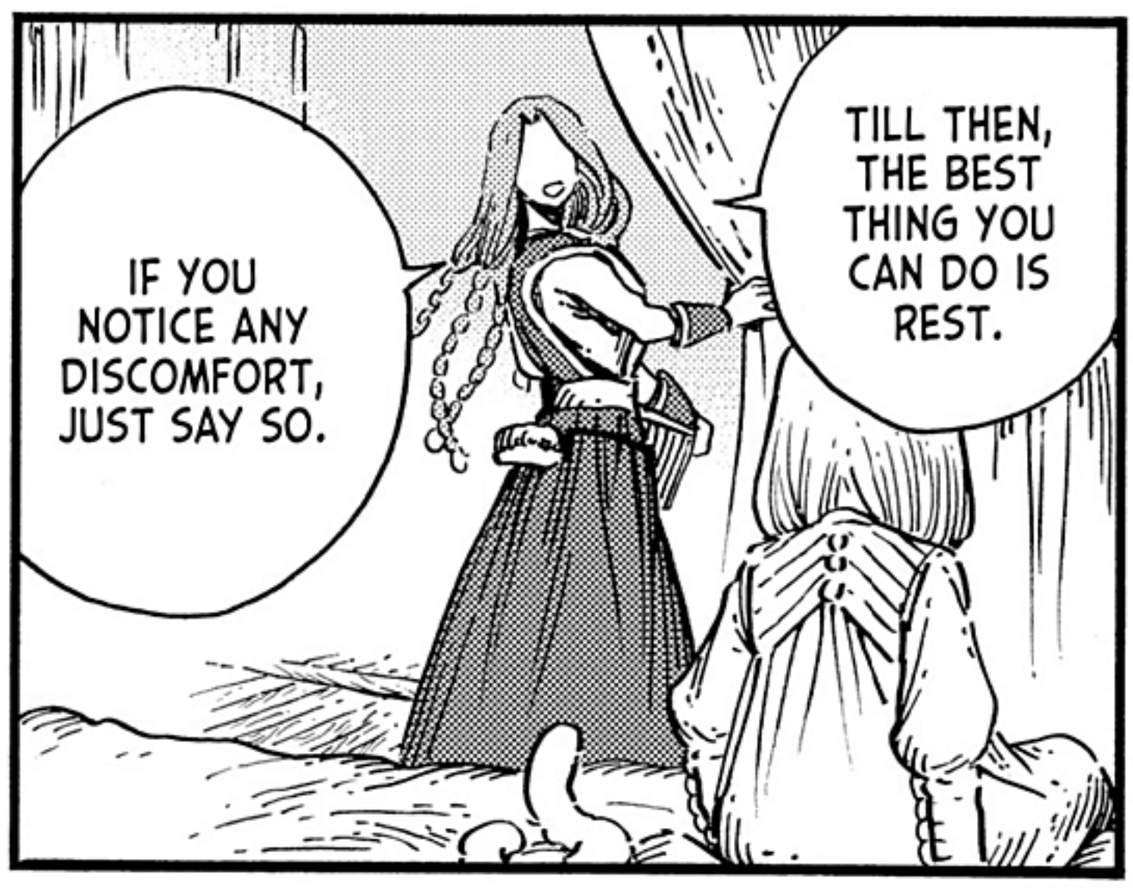

N-NO... NOTHING LIKE THAT.
I THINK I'M OKAY NOW.
...OR RINGING IN YOUR EARS?
ANY HINT OF NAUSEA...

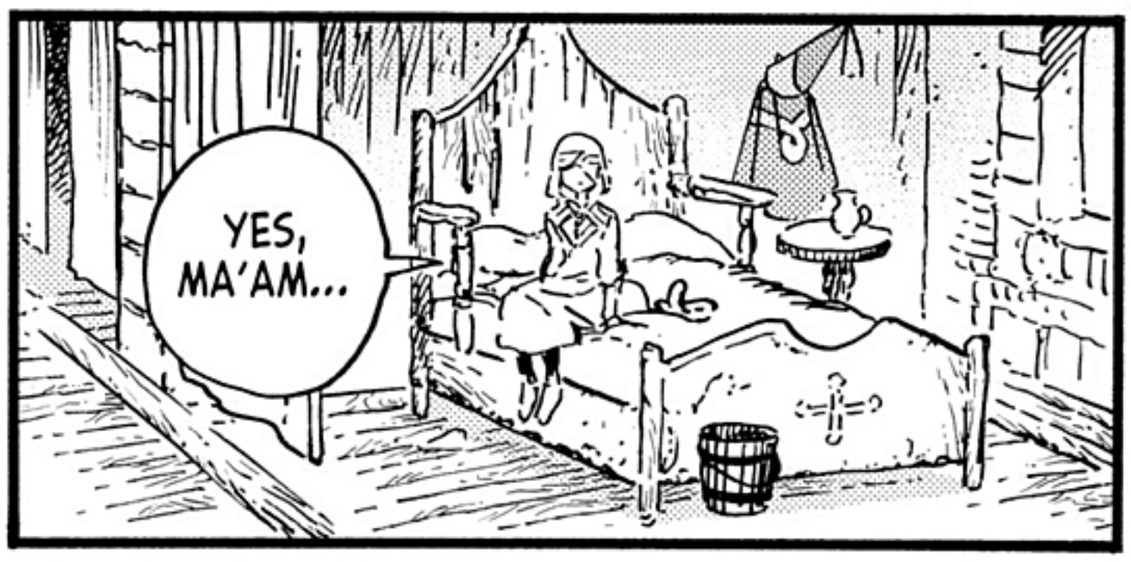

THE BANDAGES MUST FEEL A BIT FUNNY.


I DIDN'T NOTICE DAMAGE TO YOUR EYE, IF IT'S ANY RELIEF.
FOR NOW, LET'S JUST WAIT FOR THE SWELLING TO SUBSIDE.


...




IF YOU NOTICE ANY DISCOMFORT, JUST SAY SO.
TILL THEN, THE BEST THING YOU CAN DO IS REST.


YES, MA'AM...

TAK!

IT SHOULD HELP KEEP THE VALANCE LEECH AT BAY, AT LEAST FOR A TIME.
OUR NEXT CONCERN IS...

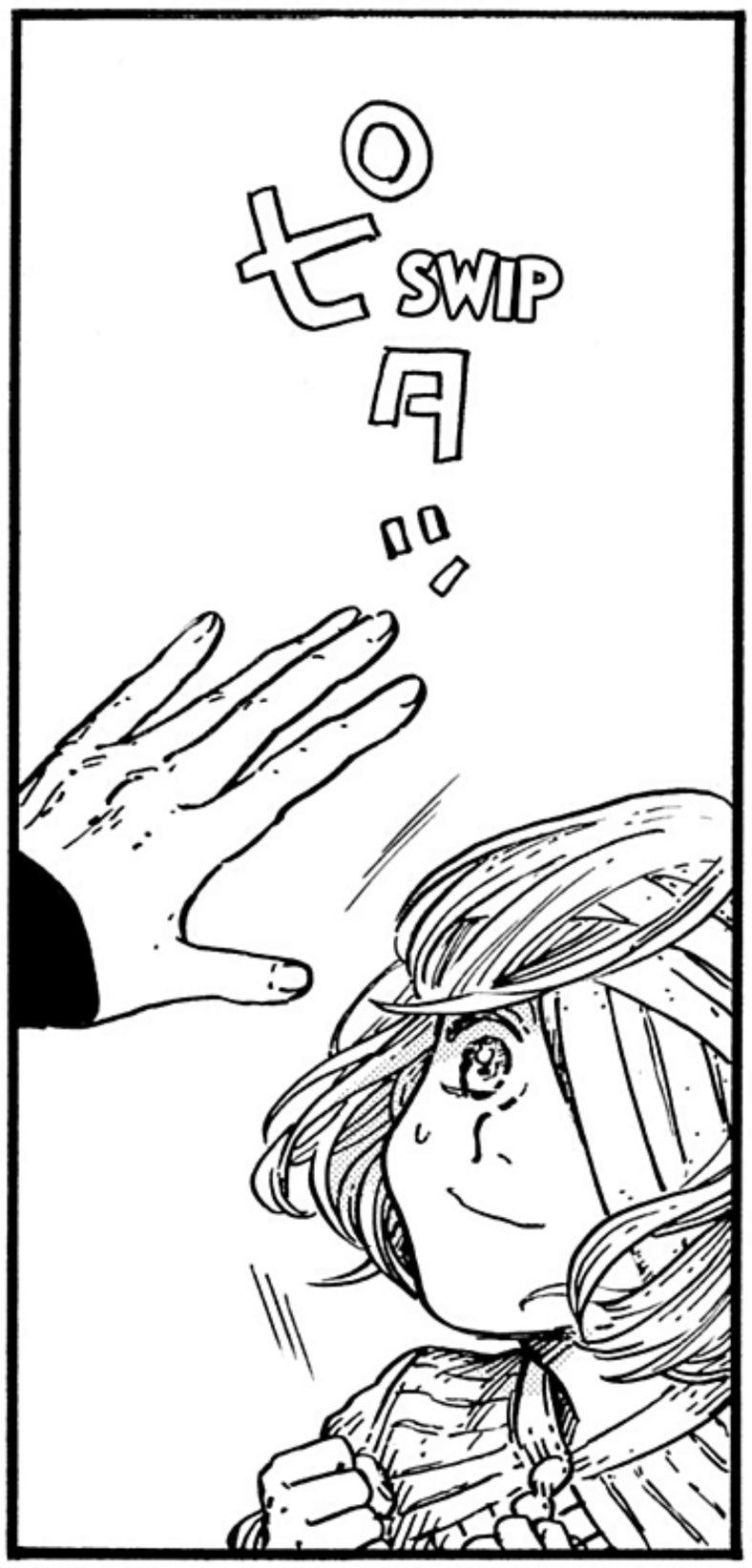
I WHIPPED UP A CLOUD OF SALT TO DUST THE OUTER WALLS OF THE SPIRE.

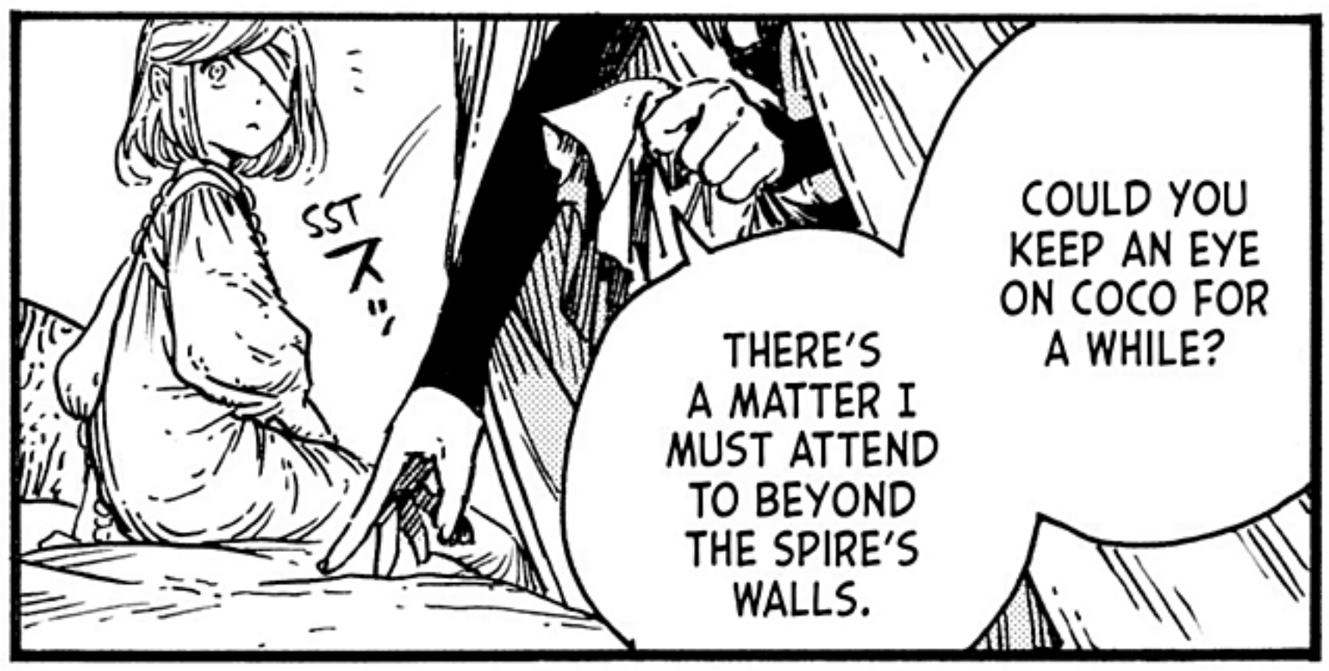
YOU NEED TO STAY HERE AND REST, AS SINOCIA INSTRUCTED.
YOU'RE BADLY HURT.
NO, COCO.
ドキッ
JOLT!!
SNEAK
BUT MASTER ...!
I HAVE TO FIND HIM!
CUSTAS IS STILL OUT THERE, AND—
ENOUGH!

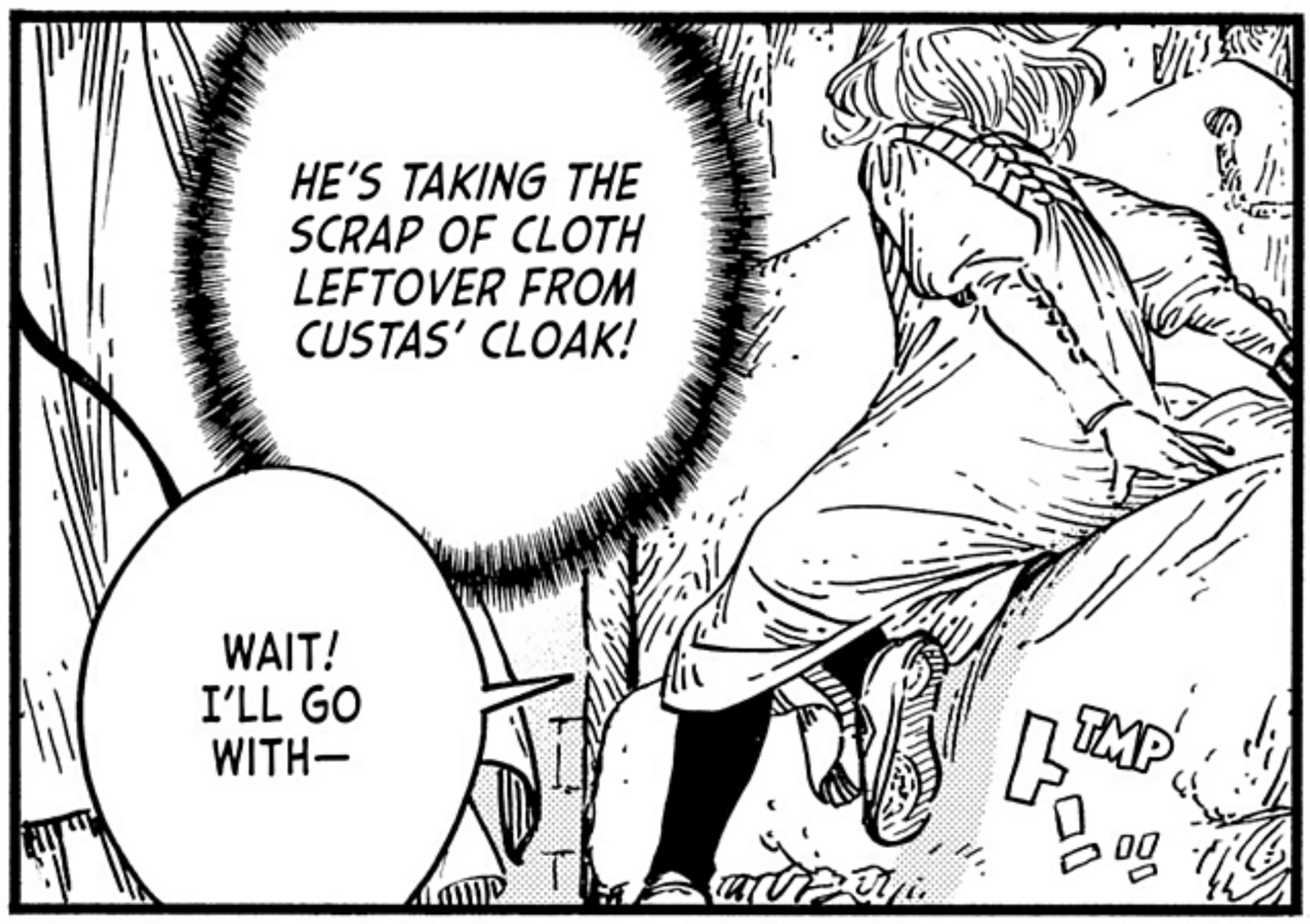
GUHHH...
SORRY, MASTER.
I...
I WASN'T TRYING TO GET HIT.
S...
YOU'RE KIDDING, RIGHT?
SLMP
N-NO, UM...!
I THOUGHT I COULD MOVE FAST ENOUGH TO GET US *BOTH* OUT OF THE WAY.
WHAT I MEAN IS...!
...wants to get hit?!
GNH...!
Who in their right mind...
OF *COURSE* YOU WEREN'T!

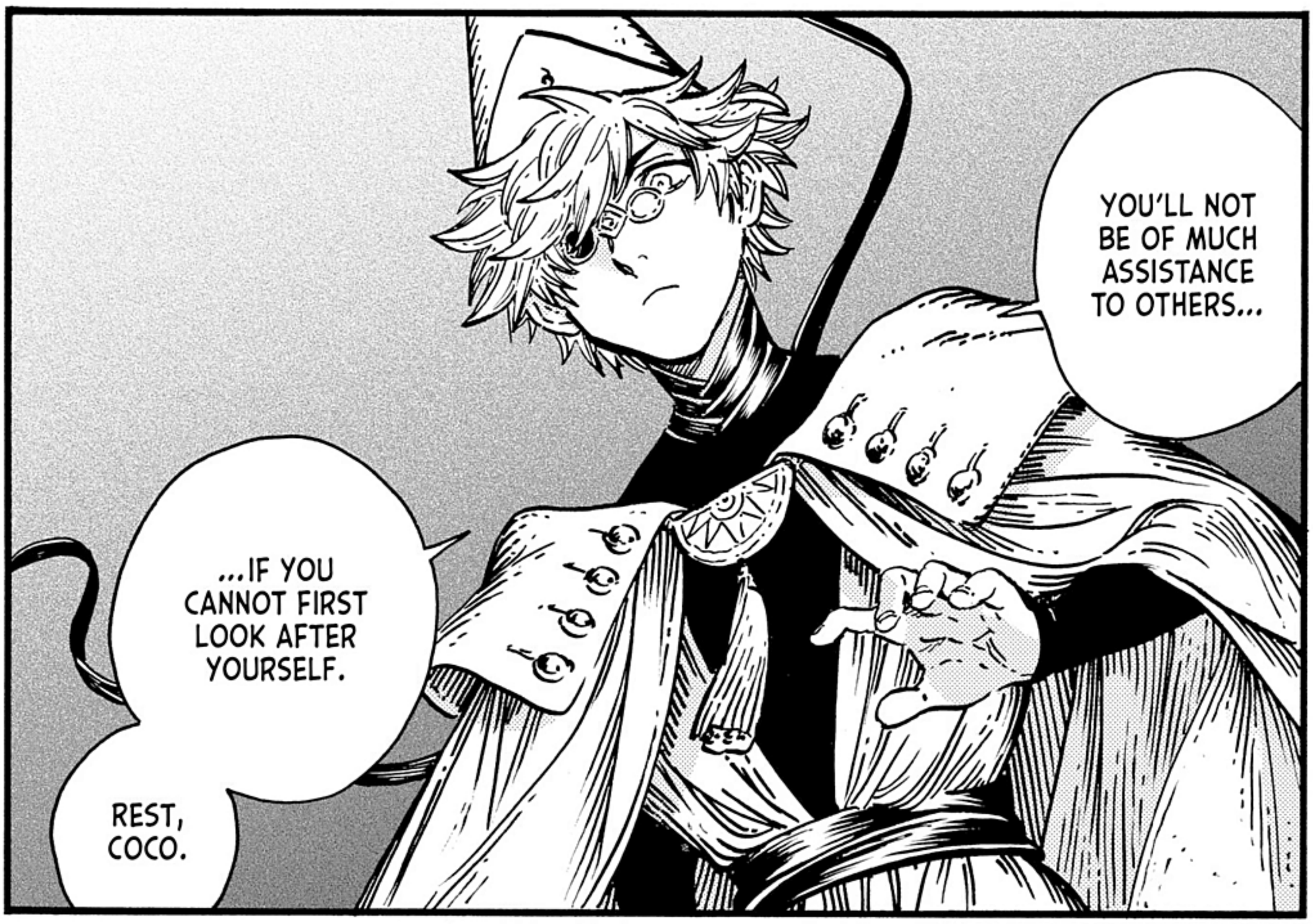
WHEN...
WHEN THE BOLT STRUCK, AND I SAW YOU COLLAPSE...
I WAS DEATHLY AFRAID, COCO.
I FELT MY INSIDES TURN TO ICE.
...

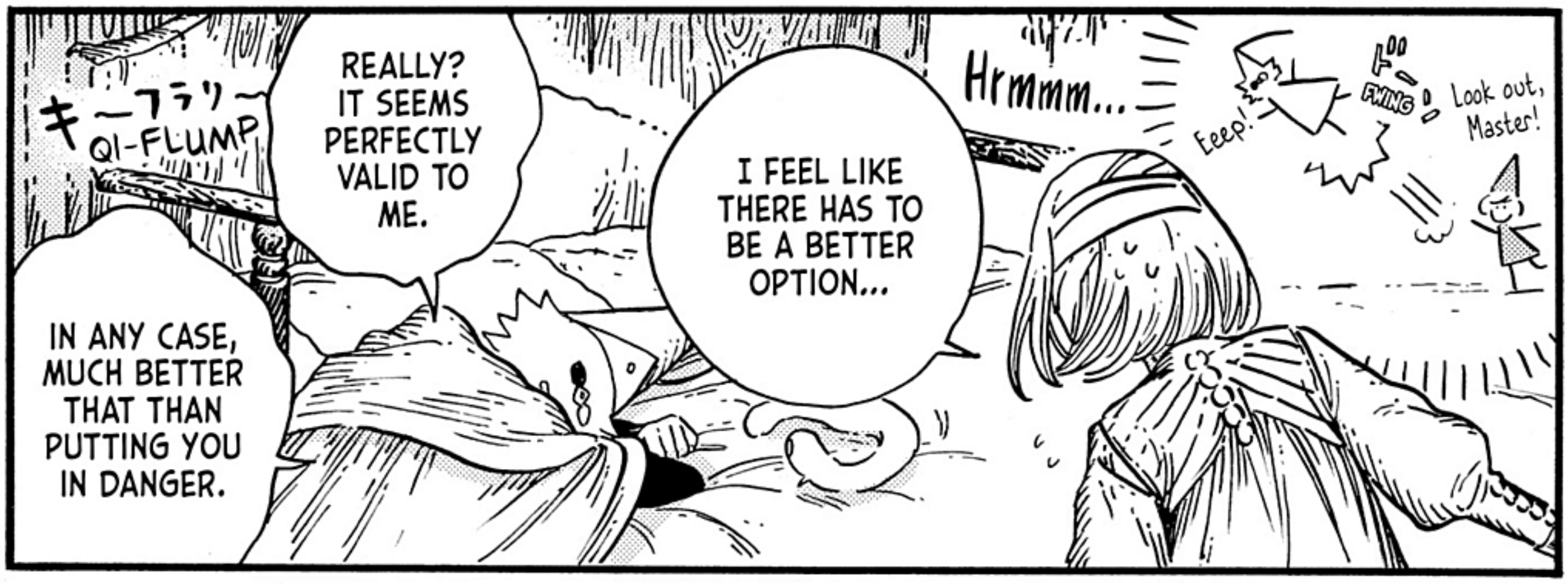
I'LL...
I'LL BE MORE CAREFUL NEXT TIME! I PROMISE!
I GOT THIS!
I DON'T WANT THERE TO *BE* A NEXT TIME, COCO!
YOU SHOULDN'T BE LEAPING IN FRONT OF LIGHTNING BOLTS TO BEGIN WITH!
...WHEN THE NEXT CRISIS STRIKES, YOU'LL JUMP INTO ACTION YET AGAIN.
THE WORST PART IS, I KNOW THAT FOR ALL MY ADMONISH-MENTS...
FRET
FRET
...YOU'LL USE YOUR *SPELLS* TO SEND ME SAILING OUT OF HARM'S WAY?
COULD YOU AT LEAST ASSURE ME THAT INSTEAD OF KNOCKING ME ASIDE WITH *YOUR* SHOULDER...

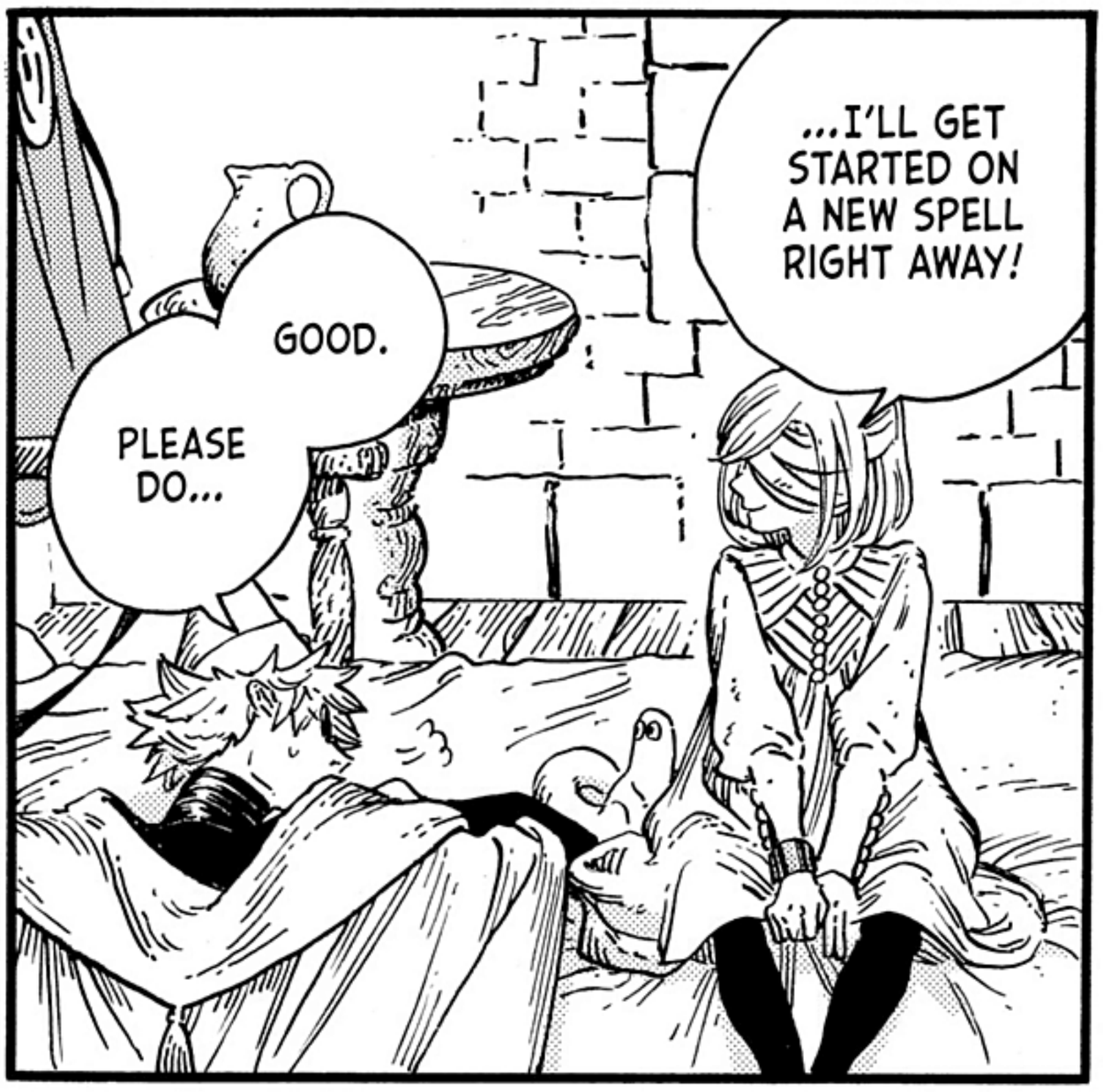

SWIP

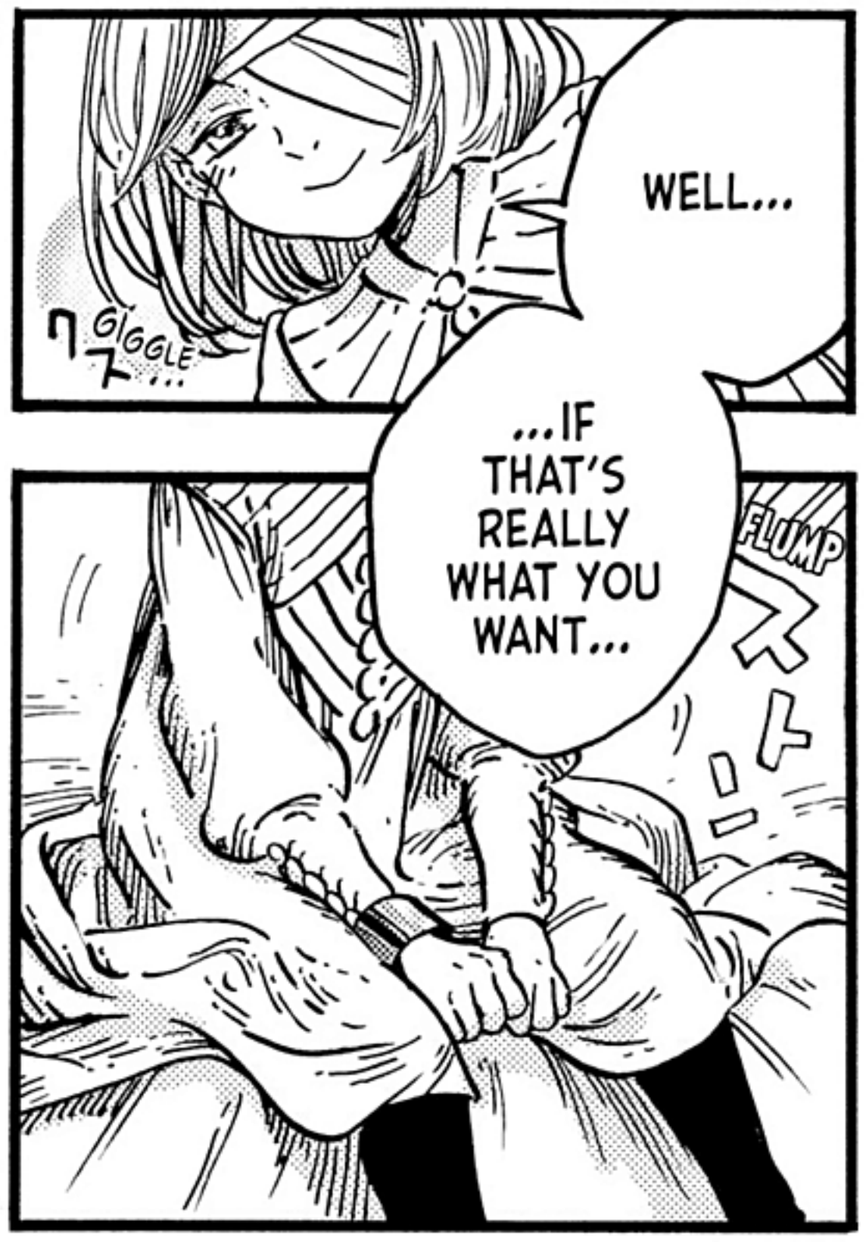

SST
COULD YOU KEEP AN EYE ON COCO FOR A WHILE?
THERE'S A MATTER I MUST ATTEND TO BEYOND THE SPIRE'S WALLS.

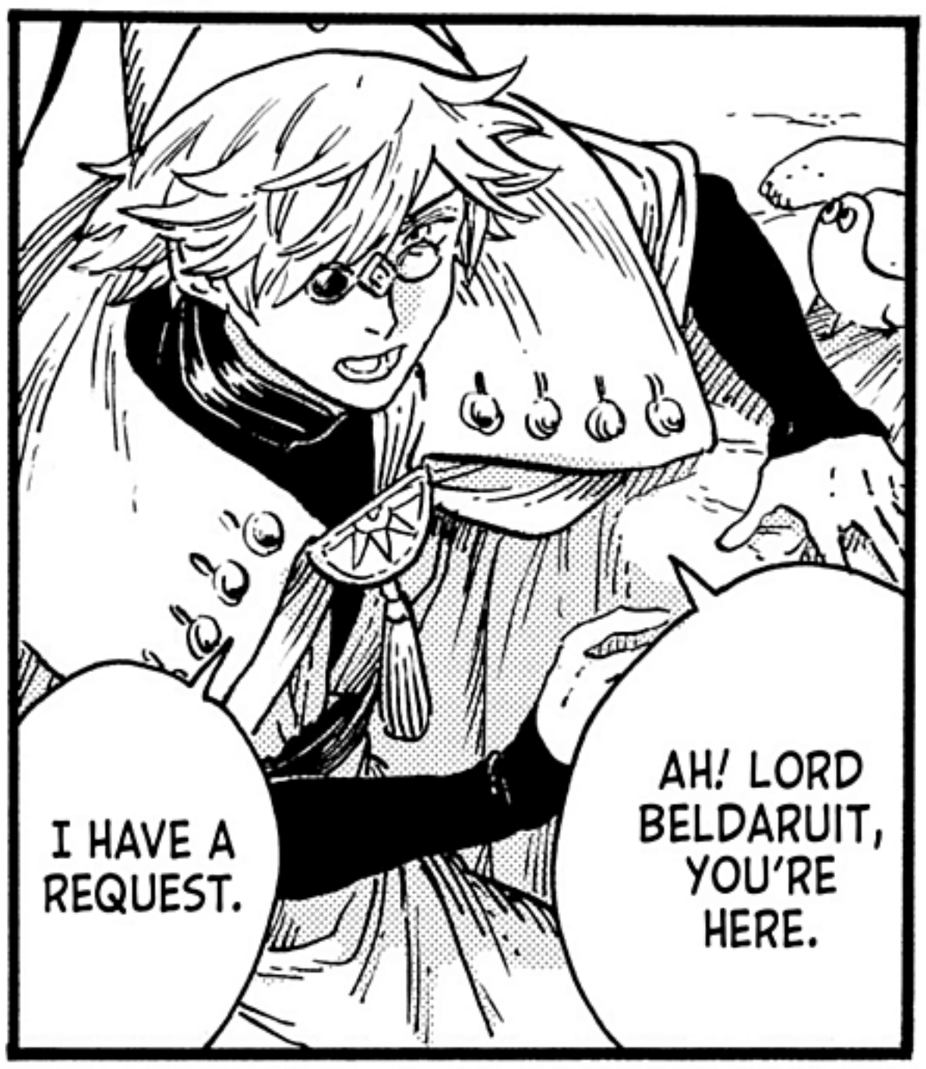

HE'S TAKING THE SCRAP OF CLOTH LEFTOVER FROM CUSTAS' CLOAK!
WAIT! I'LL GO WITH—
TMP

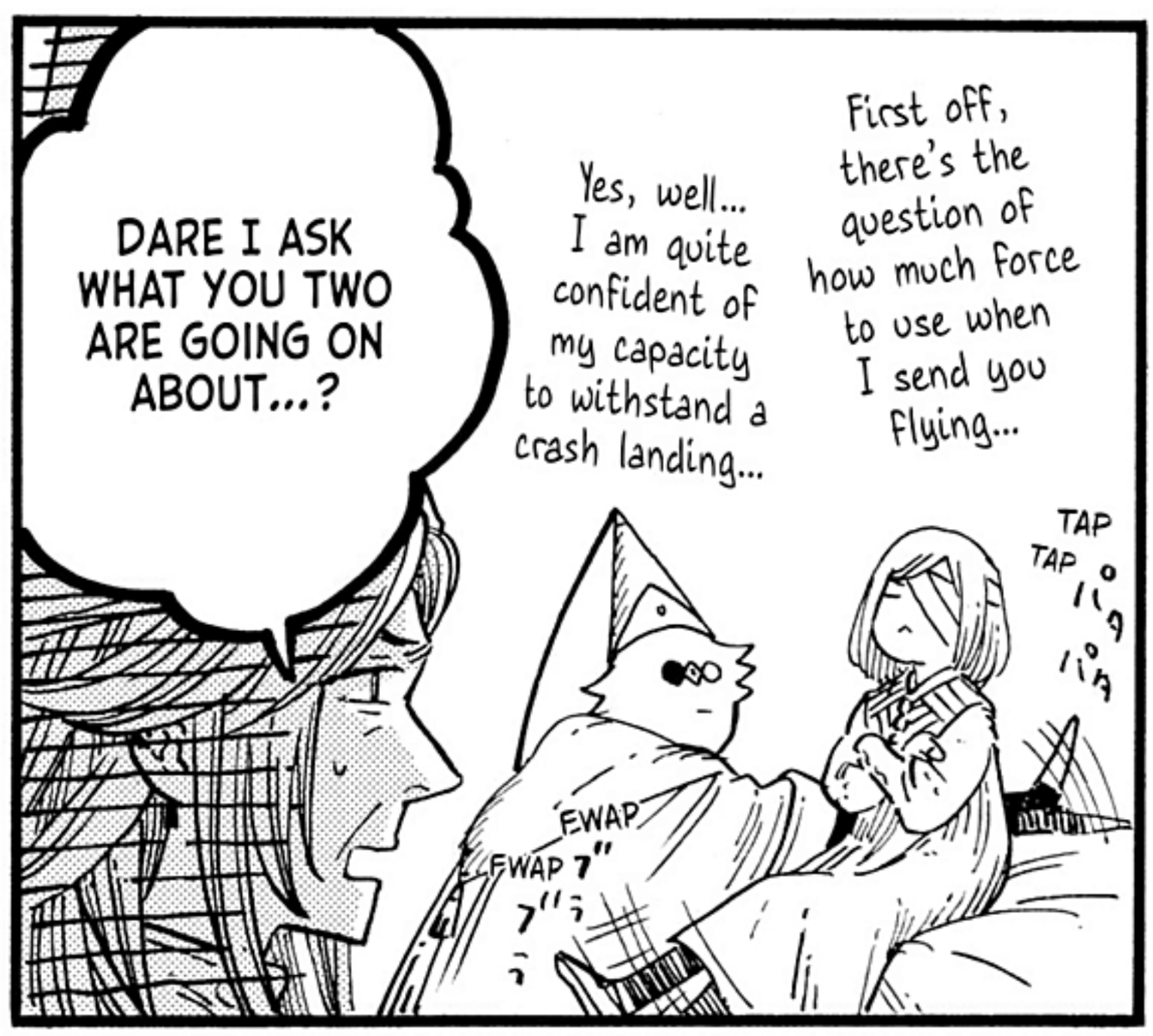

YOU'LL NOT BE OF MUCH ASSISTANCE TO OTHERS...
...IF YOU CANNOT FIRST LOOK AFTER YOURSELF.
REST, COCO.


キーフラリ
QI-FLUMP
REALLY? IT SEEMS PERFECTLY VALID TO ME.
IN ANY CASE, MUCH BETTER THAT THAN PUTTING YOU IN DANGER.
I FEEL LIKE THERE HAS TO BE A BETTER OPTION...
Hrmmm...
Eeep!
FWING
Look out, Master!


...I'LL GET STARTED ON A NEW SPELL RIGHT AWAY!
GOOD.
PLEASE DO...


WELL...
GIGGLE
...IF THAT'S REALLY WHAT YOU WANT...
FLUMP

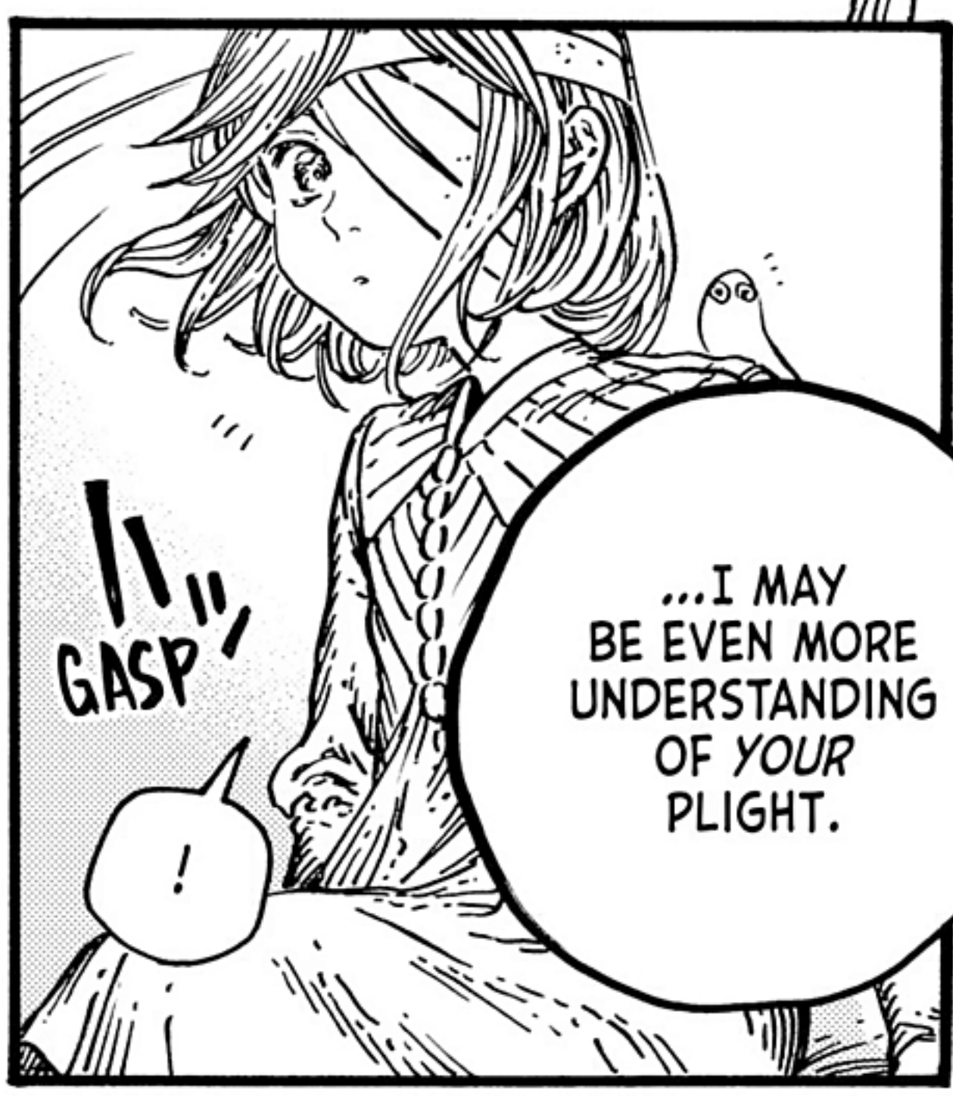

AH! LORD BELDARUIT, YOU'RE HERE.
I HAVE A REQUEST.

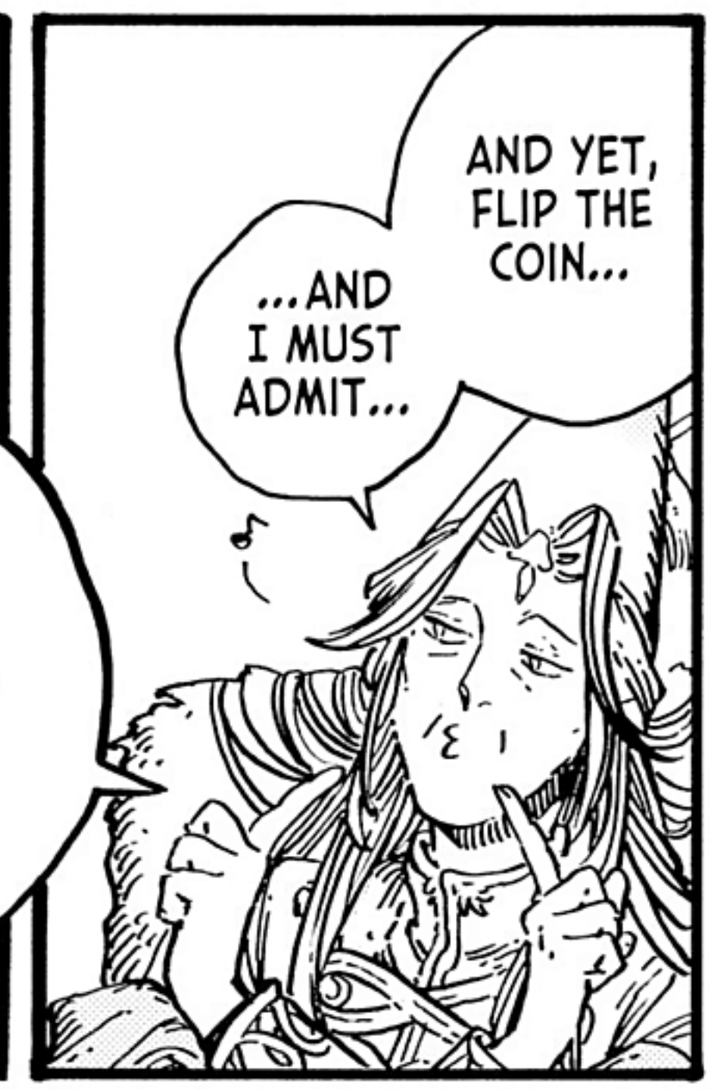

DARE I ASK WHAT YOU TWO ARE GOING ON ABOUT...?
Yes, well... I am quite confident of my capacity to withstand a crash landing...
First off, there's the question of how much force to use when I send you flying...
TAP TAP
FWAP
FWAP

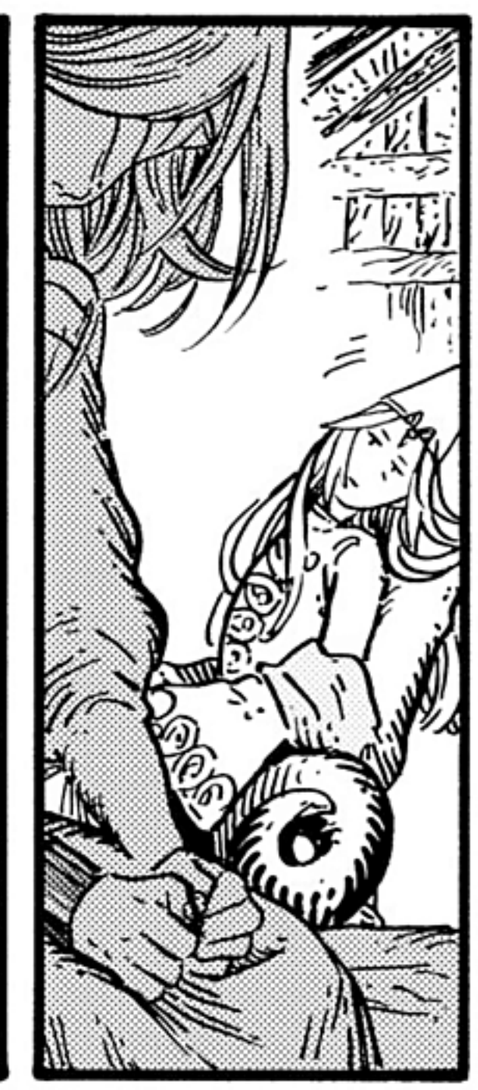
I KNOW WHAT IT IS TO HAVE AN EAGER APPRENTICE WHO PERSISTS IN PUSHING HIMSELF TOO HARD...

I CERTAINLY DO. SO MUCH SO THAT IT PAINS ME.

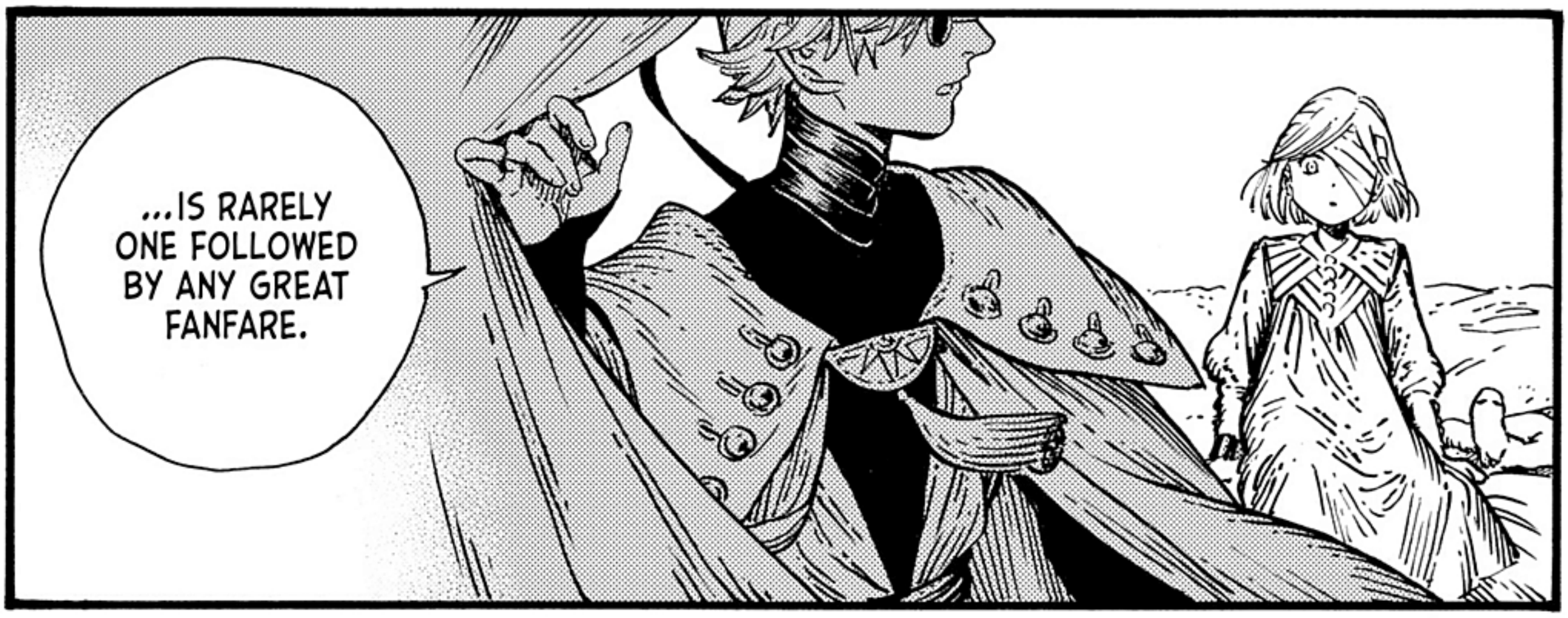
...WITHOUT PATIENCE FOR A MASTER'S PLEAS FOR TEMPERANCE.

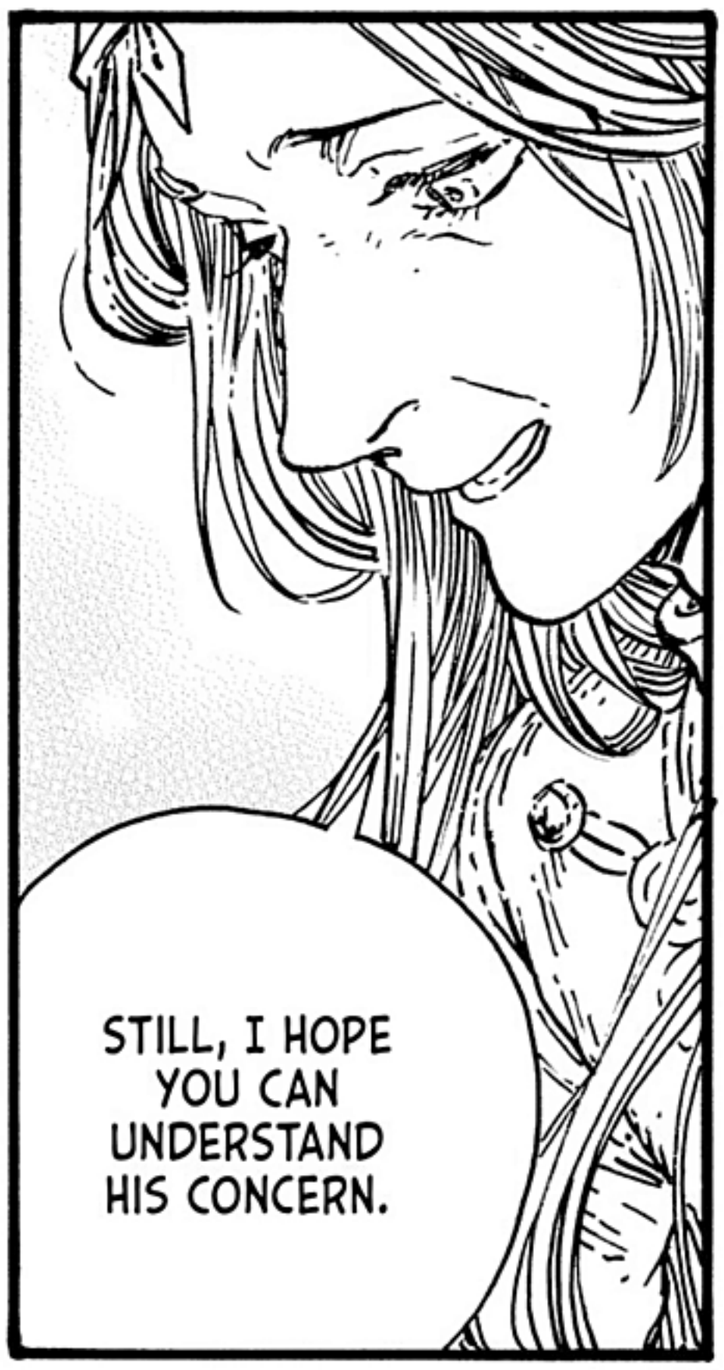




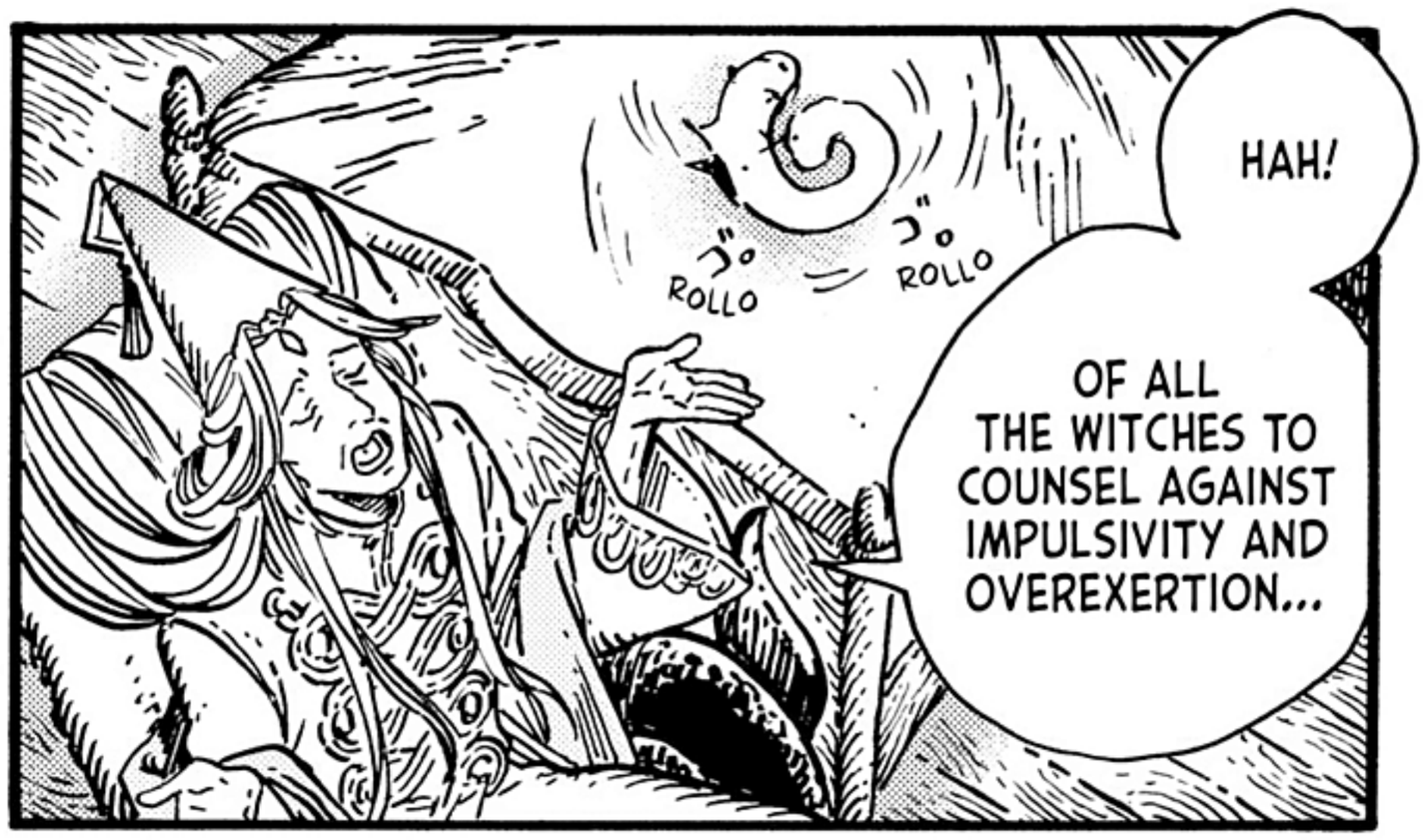


ANY RESCUE THAT COMES AT GREAT COST TO ITS HERO...


...IS RARELY ONE FOLLOWED BY ANY GREAT FANFARE.


STILL, I HOPE YOU CAN UNDERSTAND HIS CONCERN.

...

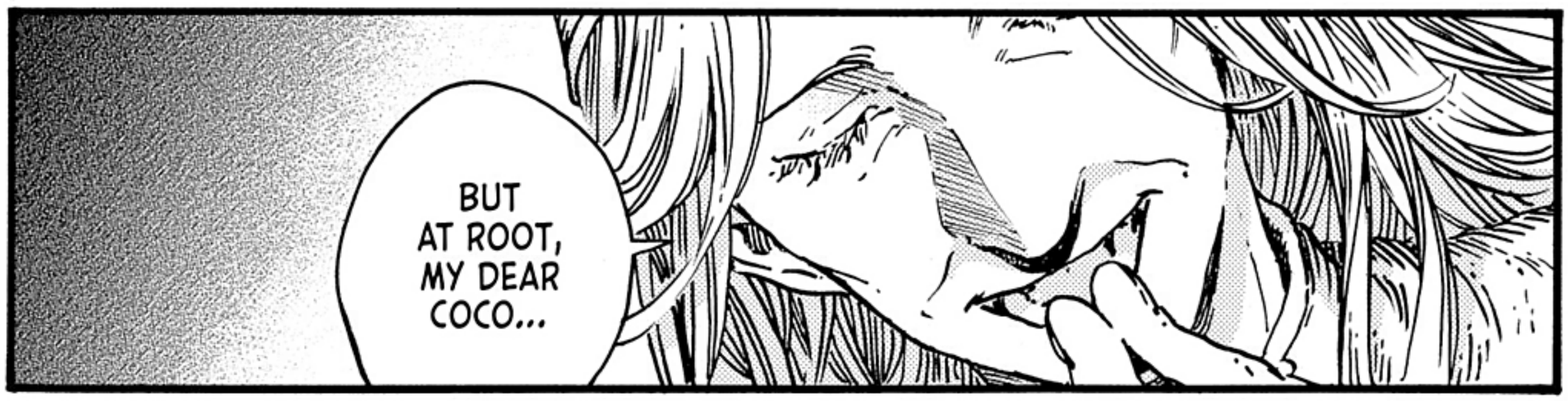

HAH!
ROLLO
ROLLO
OF ALL THE WITCHES TO COUNSEL AGAINST IMPULSIVITY AND OVEREXERTION...

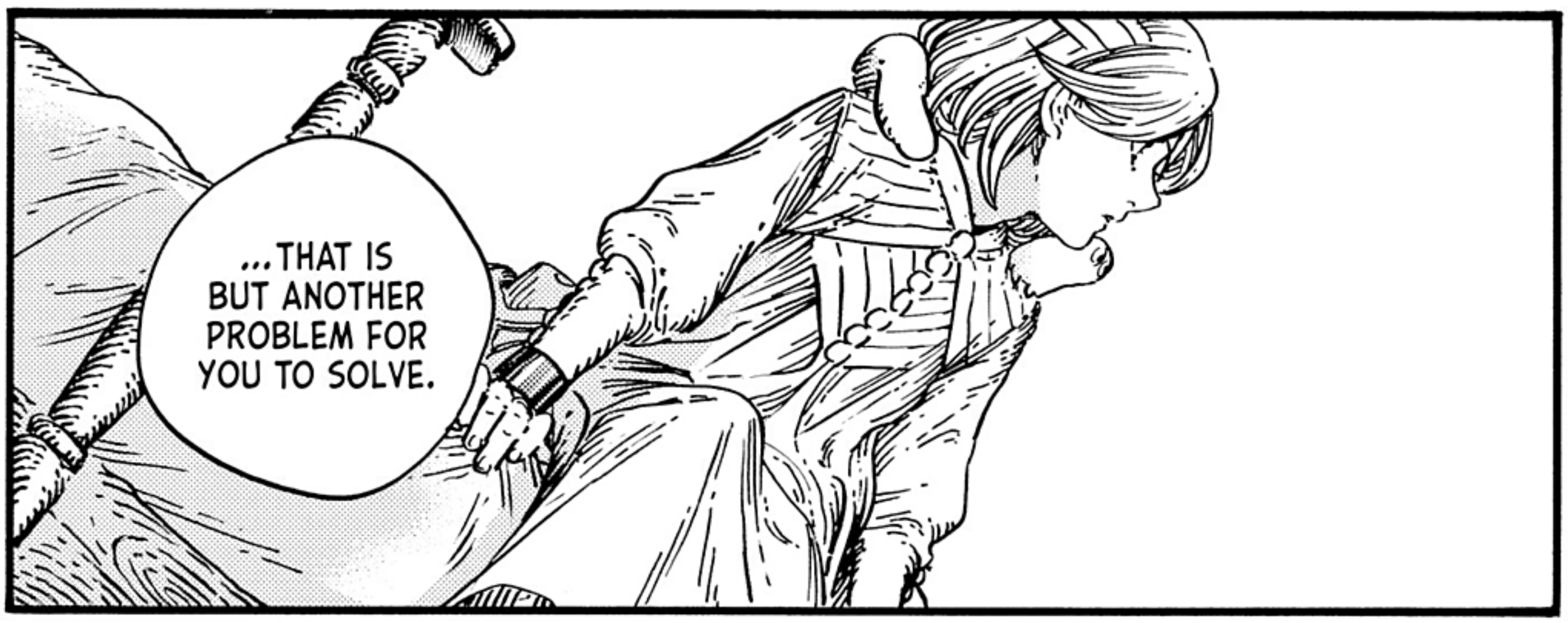
AH, HOW FRUSTRATING IT IS TO BE SHELTERED...

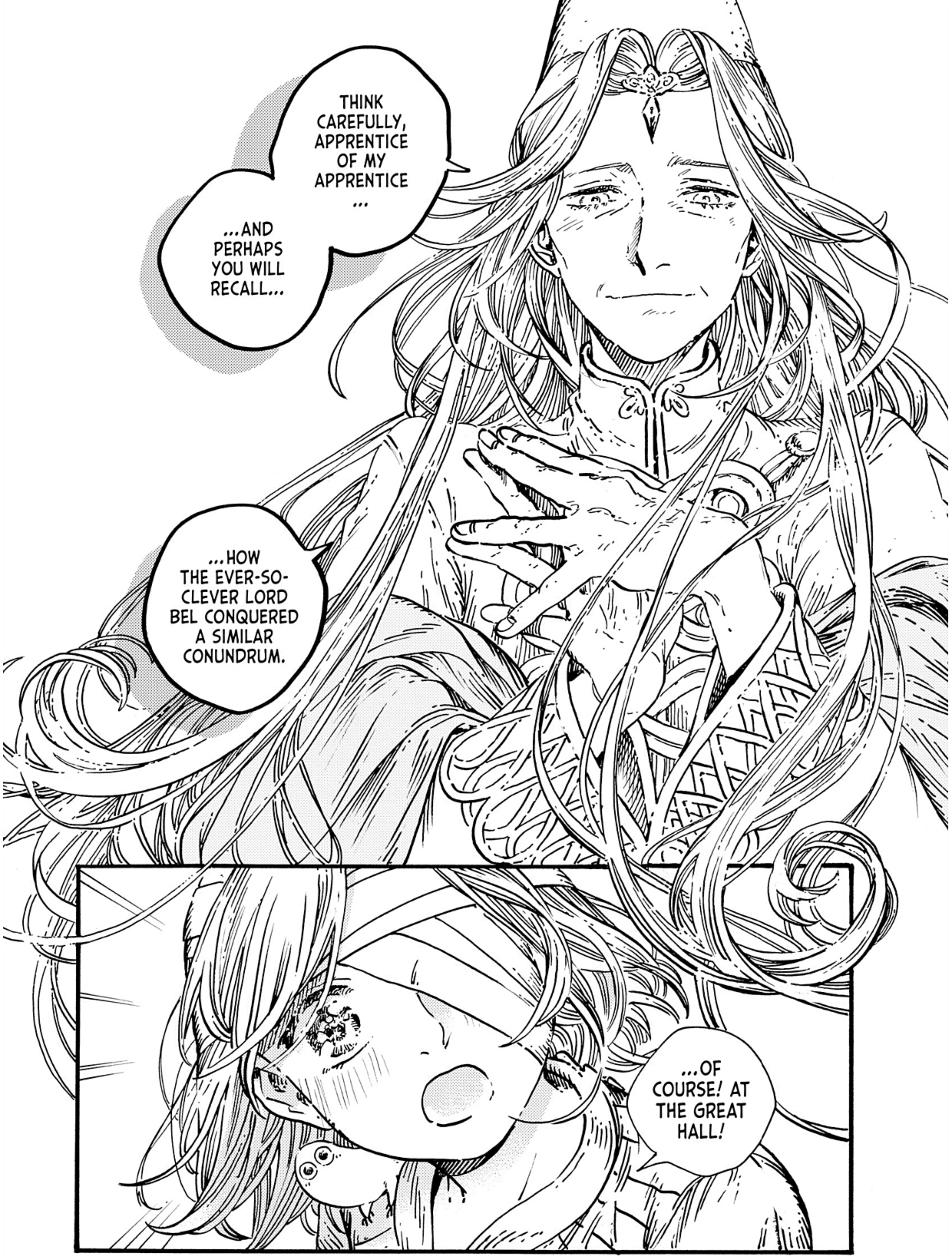
...TO BE KEPT INSIDE...

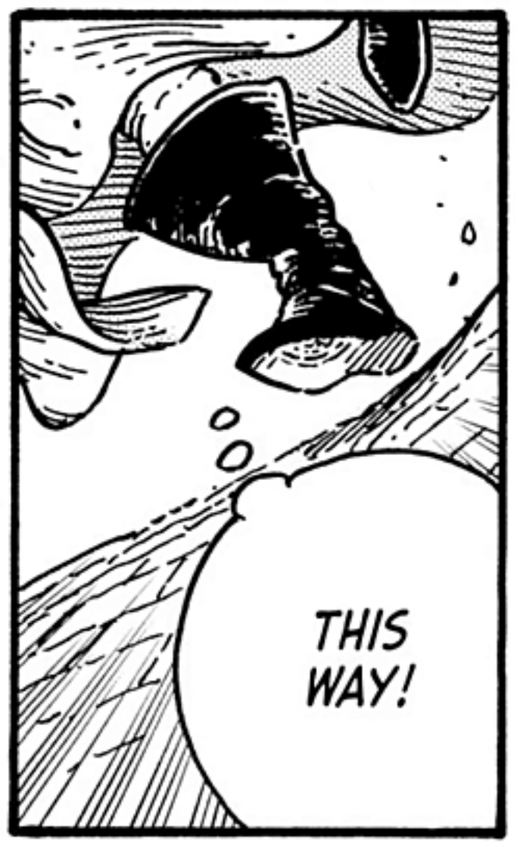
TO HAVE FREEDOM TETHERED BY A MEASURED ADULT.

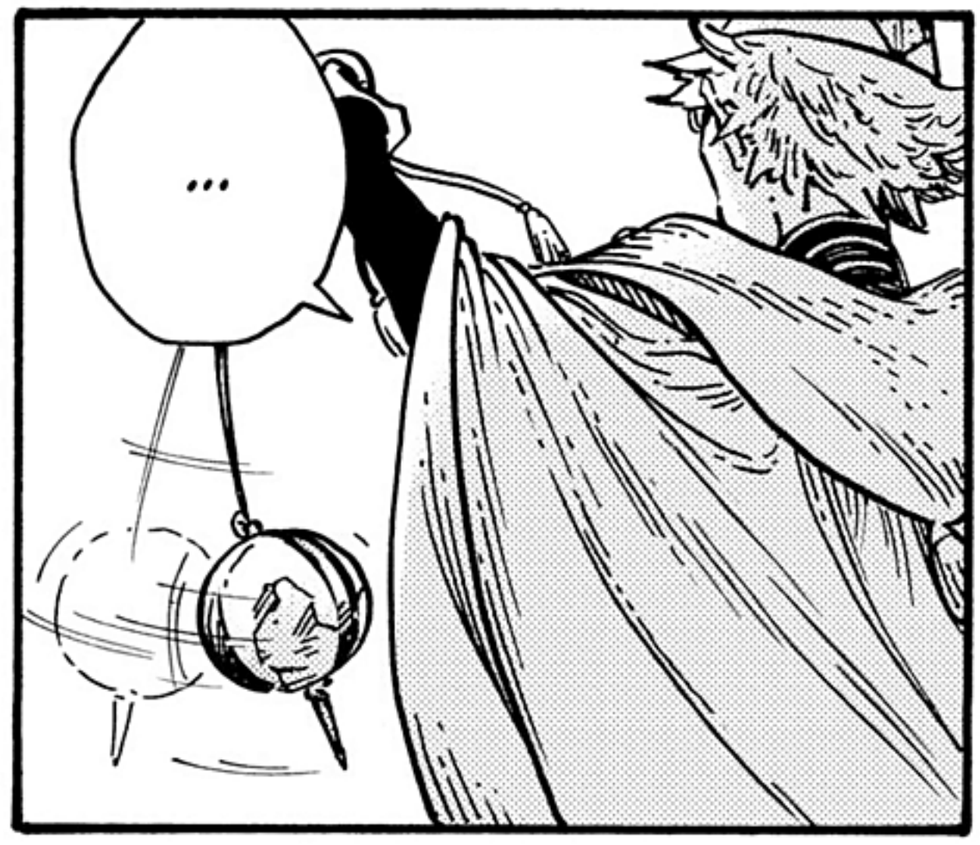
...AND SHIELDED FROM EVERY RISK.

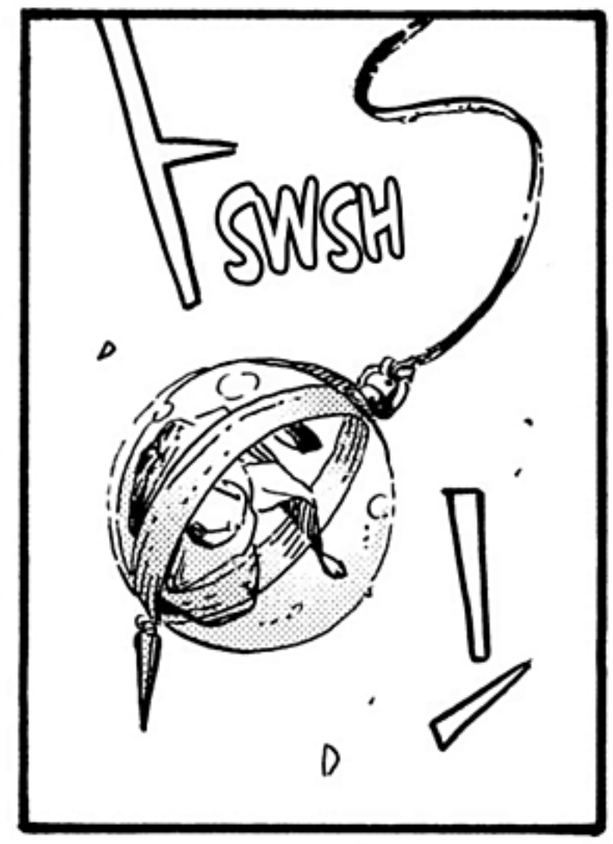




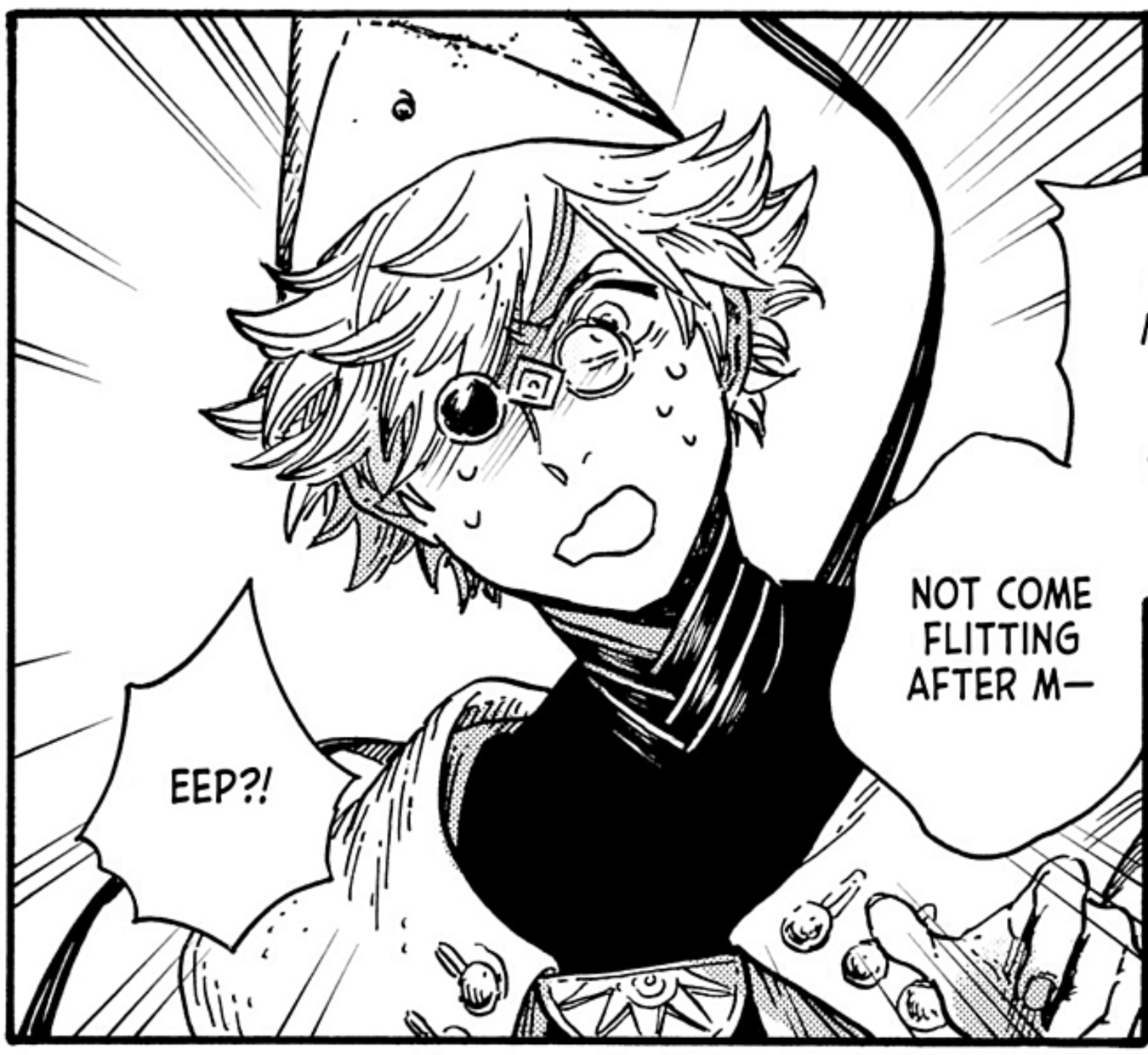

THINK CAREFULLY, APPRENTICE OF MY APPRENTICE ...
...AND PERHAPS YOU WILL RECALL...
...HOW THE EVER-SO-CLEVER LORD BEL CONQUERED A SIMILAR CONUNDRUM.
...OF COURSE! AT THE GREAT HALL!


THIS WAY!


...

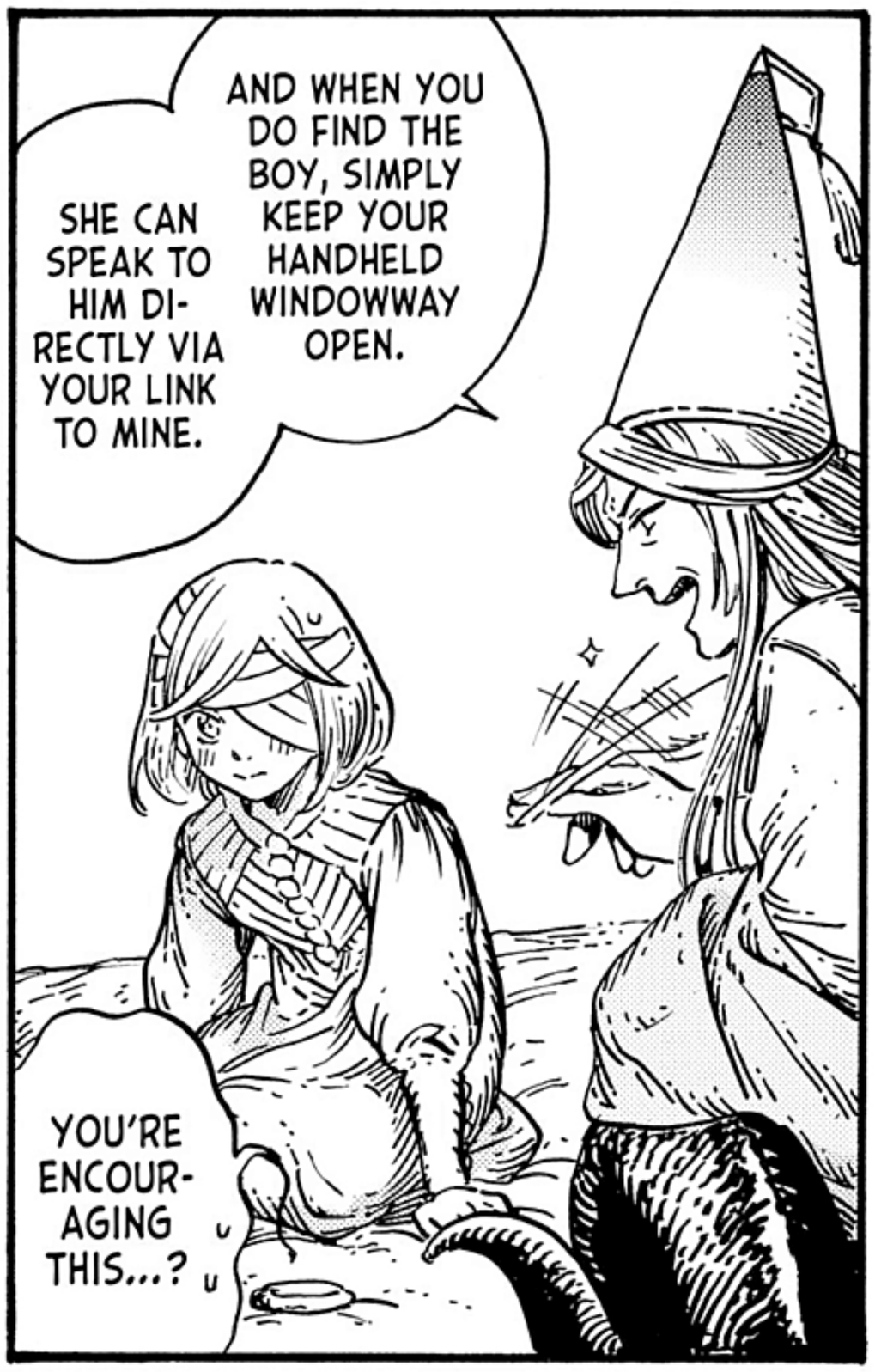

SWSH

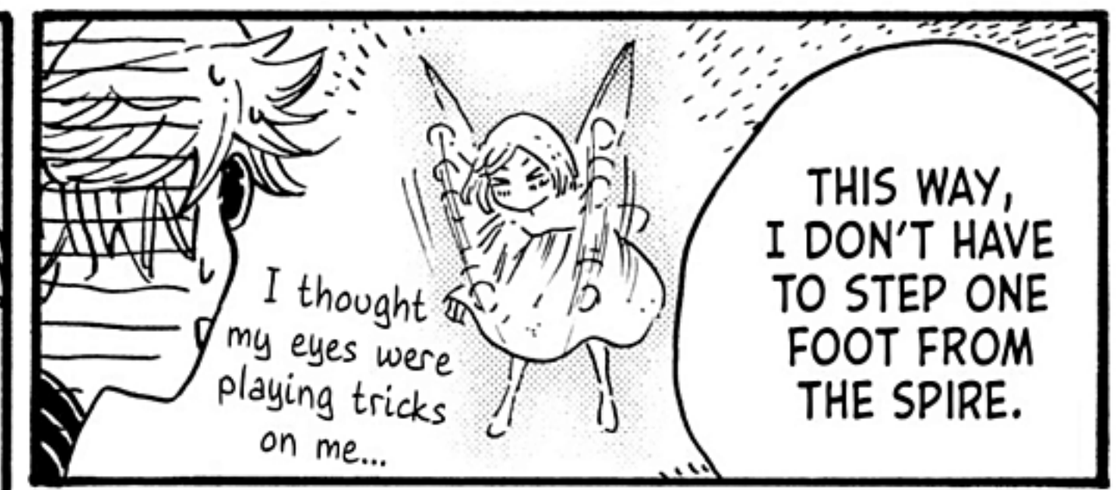
!
WAIT!
MASTER...! MASTER QIFREY...!

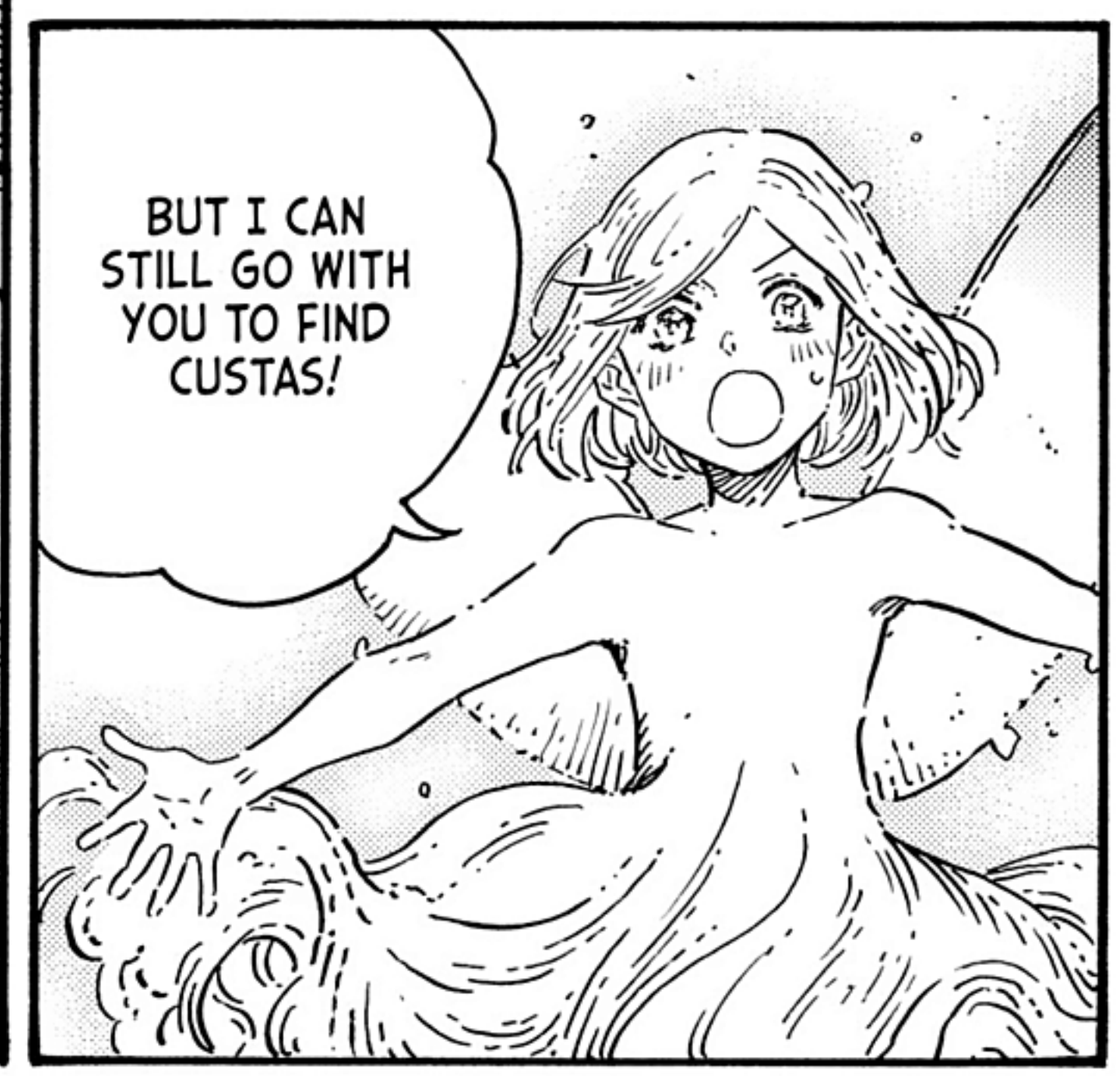

EEP?!
I THOUGHT I MADE MYSELF CLEAR! YOU'RE TO STAY IN BED!
NOT COME FLITTING AFTER M—

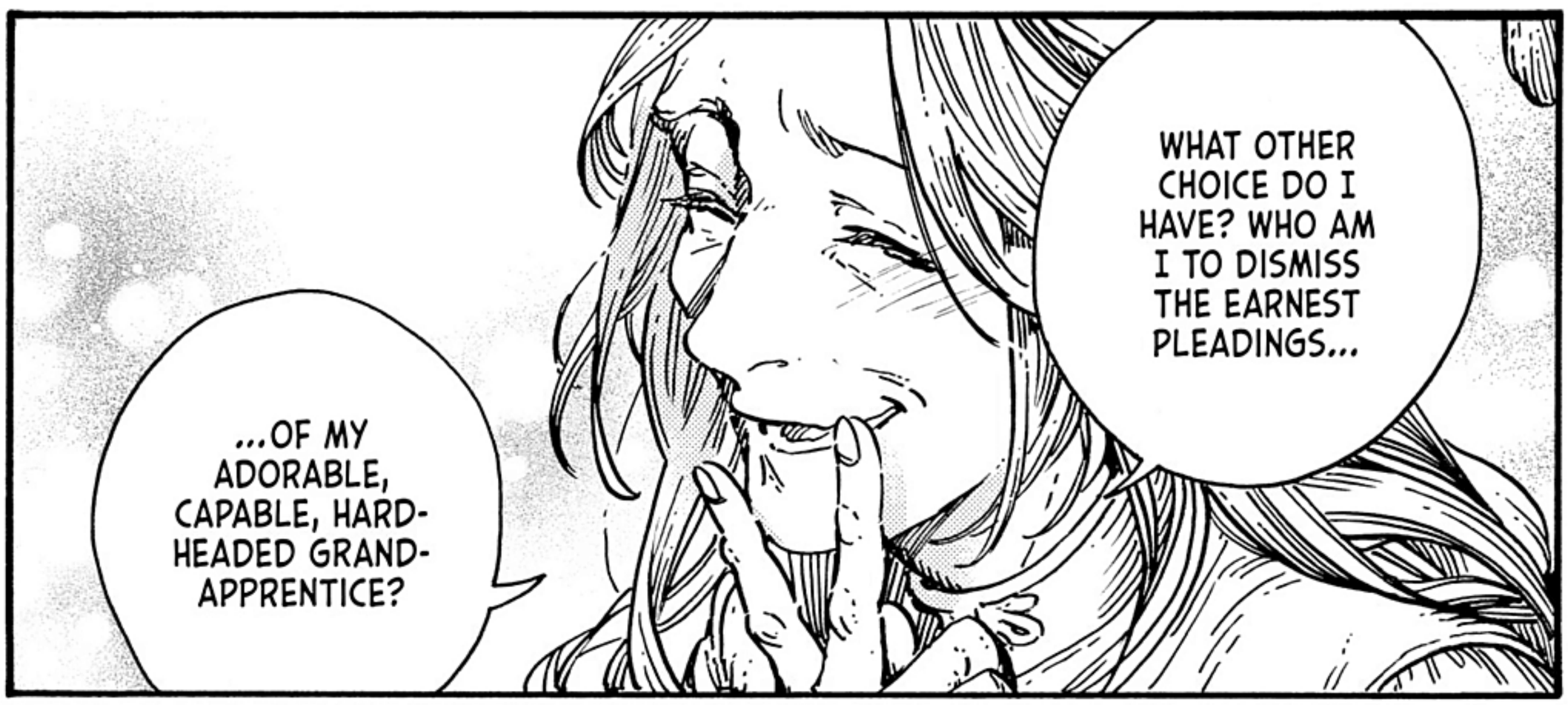
COCO?!
FWIP

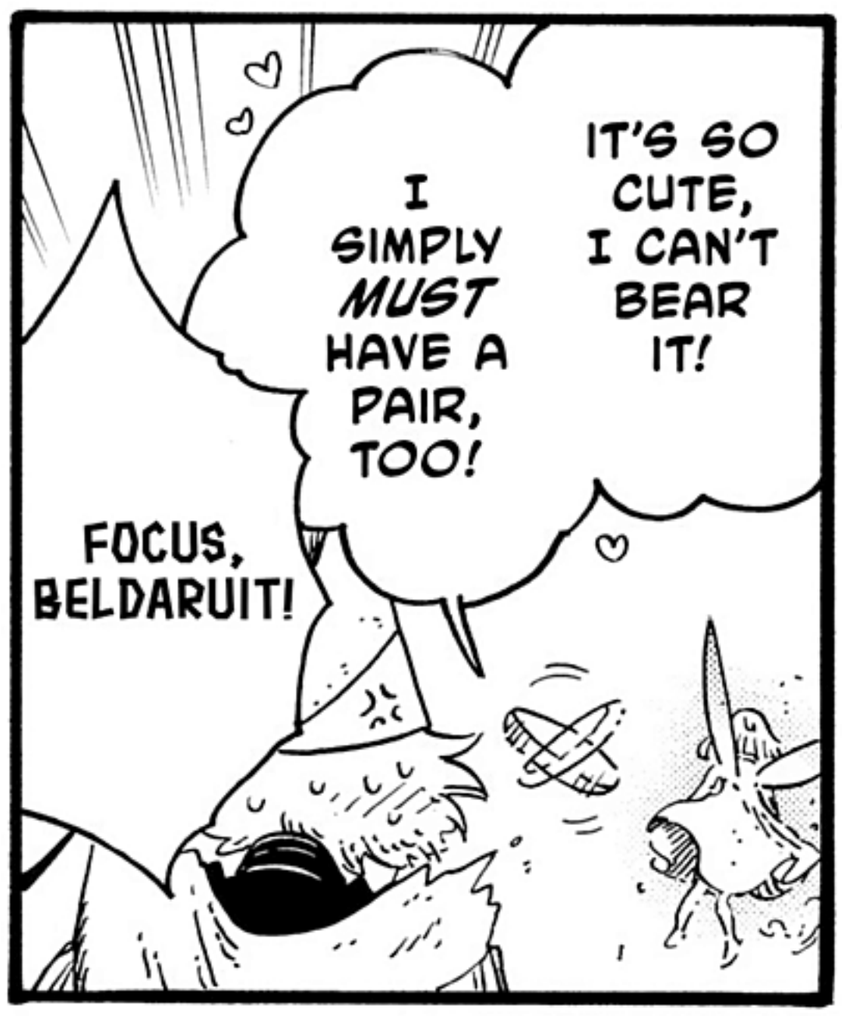
TINKER TONK
I'VE GOT MY VERY OWN SMOKE-SCULPTURE NOW!
LORD BELDARUIT HELPED ME FASHION A NEW SPELL.

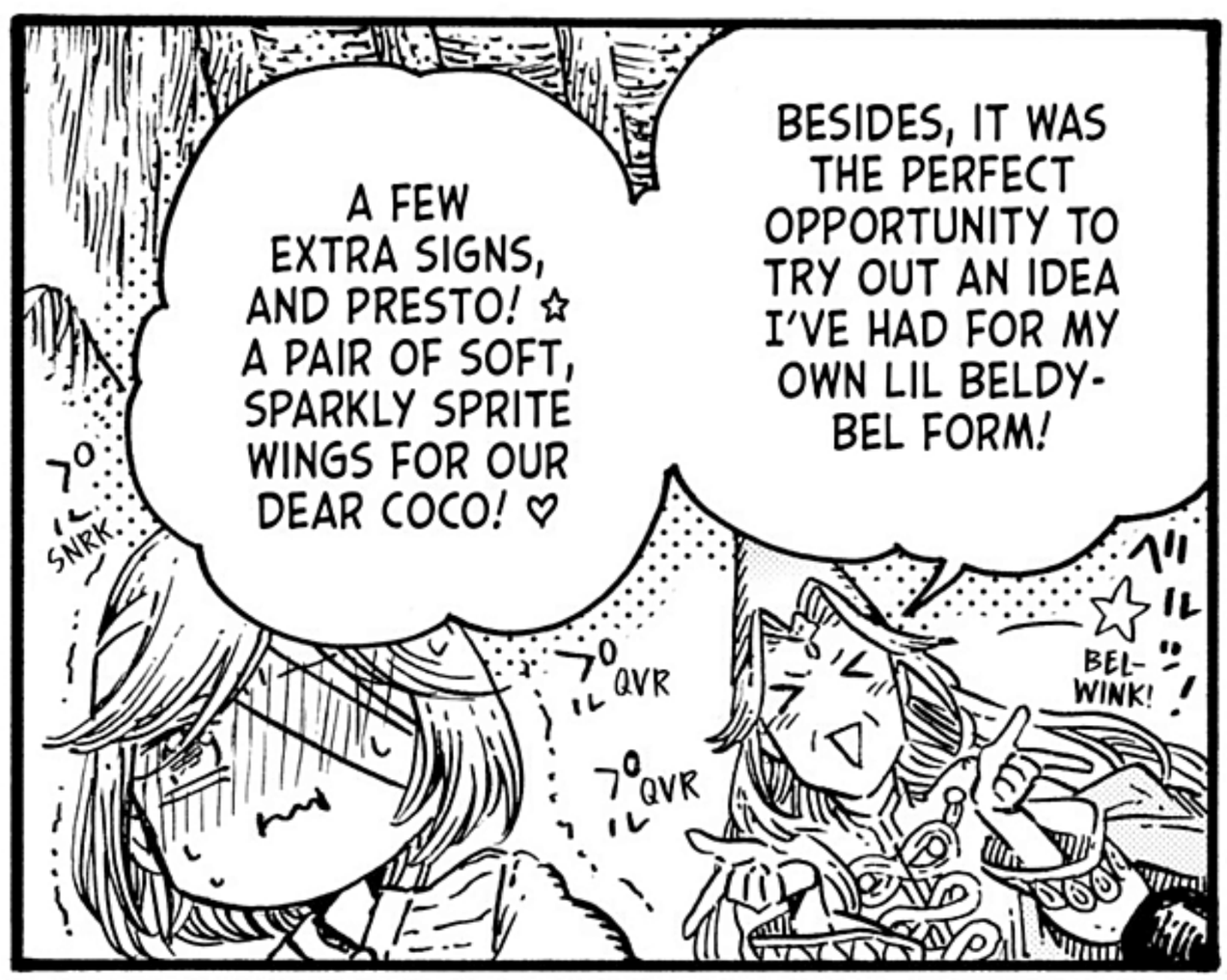

SHE CAN SPEAK TO HIM DIRECTLY VIA YOUR LINK TO MINE.
AND WHEN YOU DO FIND THE BOY, SIMPLY KEEP YOUR HANDHELD WINDOWWAY OPEN.
YOU'RE ENCOURAGING THIS...?

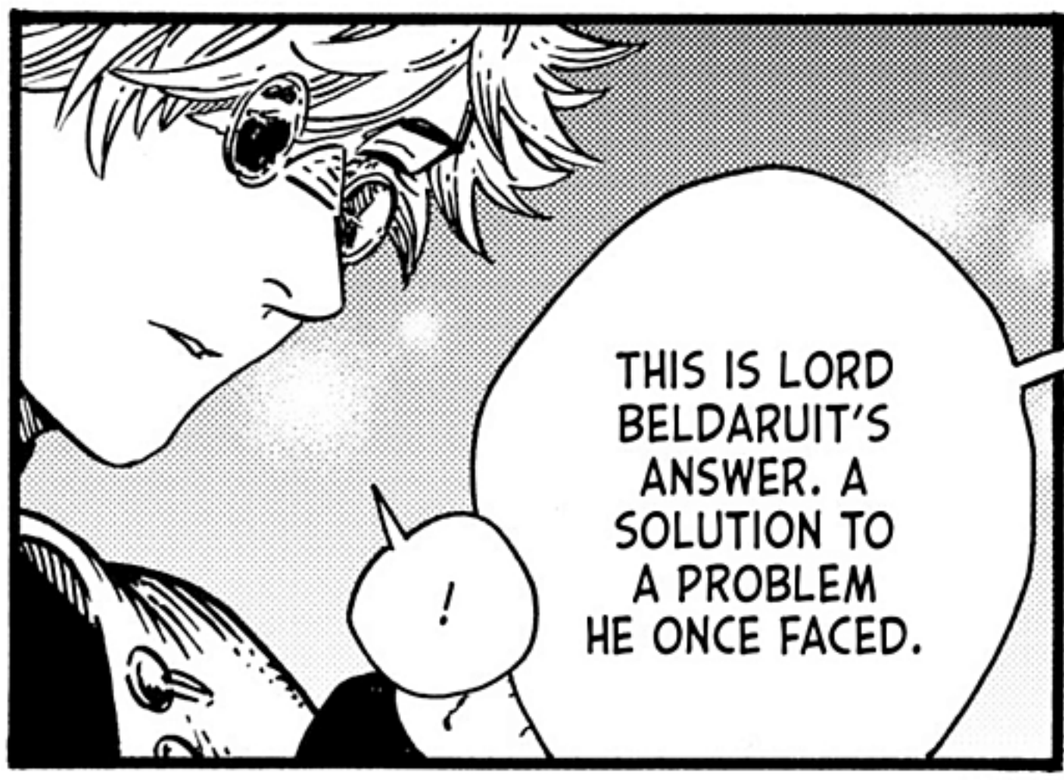

I thought my eyes were playing tricks on me...
THIS WAY, I DON'T HAVE TO STEP ONE FOOT FROM THE SPIRE.

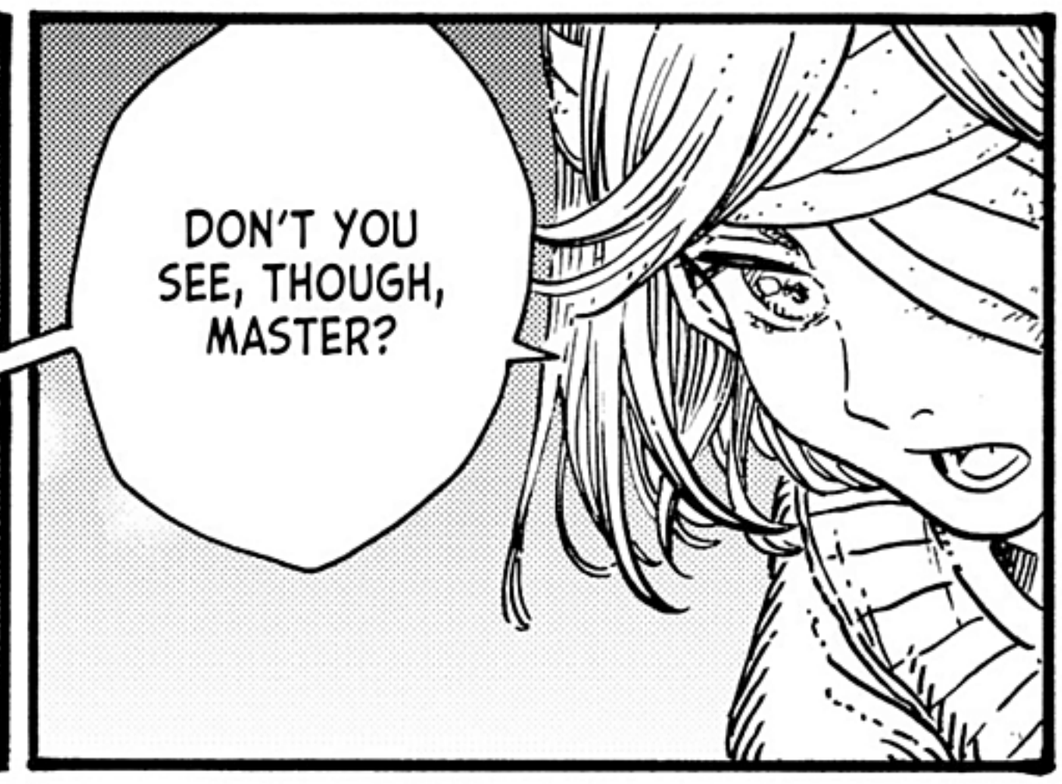

BUT I CAN STILL GO WITH YOU TO FIND CUSTAS!


WHAT OTHER CHOICE DO I HAVE? WHO AM I TO DISMISS THE EARNEST PLEADINGS...
...OF MY ADORABLE, CAPABLE, HARD-HEADED GRAND-APPRENTICE?









THAT'S WHAT YOU'VE TAUGHT ME, OVER AND OVER AGAIN.

WHEN A WITCH ENCOUNTERS A PROBLEM, SHE THINKS IT THROUGH...

...AND FASHIONS A SOLUTION.

CUSTAS DOESN'T FEEL HE CAN TRUST OTHER WITCHES.

THAT'S WHY I HAVE TO BE THE ONE TO GO.

I HAVE TO TELL HIM.

I HAVE TO SHOW HIM WHAT YOU SHOWED ME!

ON THAT FATEFUL DAY...

BACK THEN...

MY MASTER'S GAZE, GLIMMERING IN MORNING LIGHT...

...PIERCED THROUGH THE DARKNESS OF MY DESPAIR.

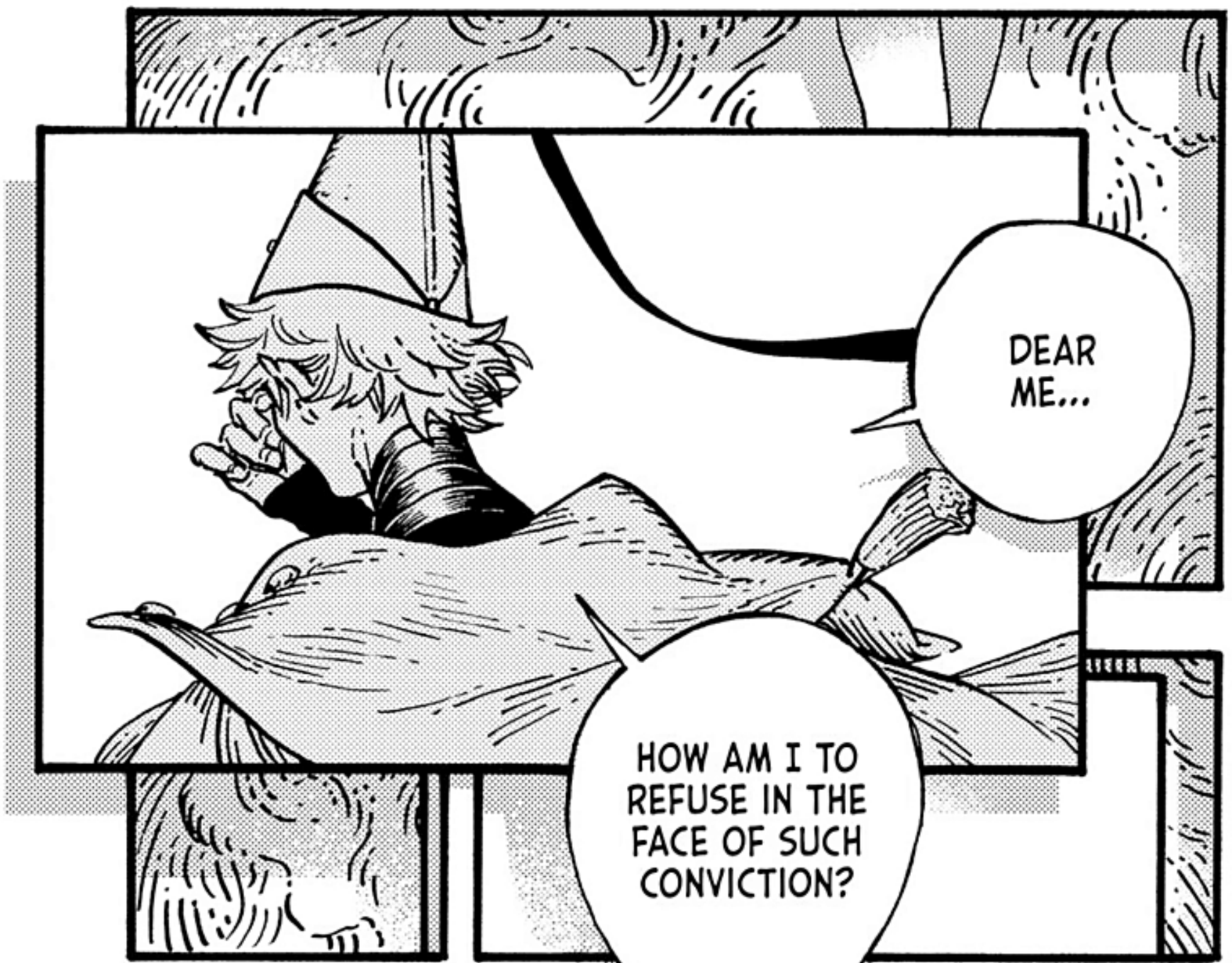
THAT WAS THE GIFT HE GAVE TO ME.

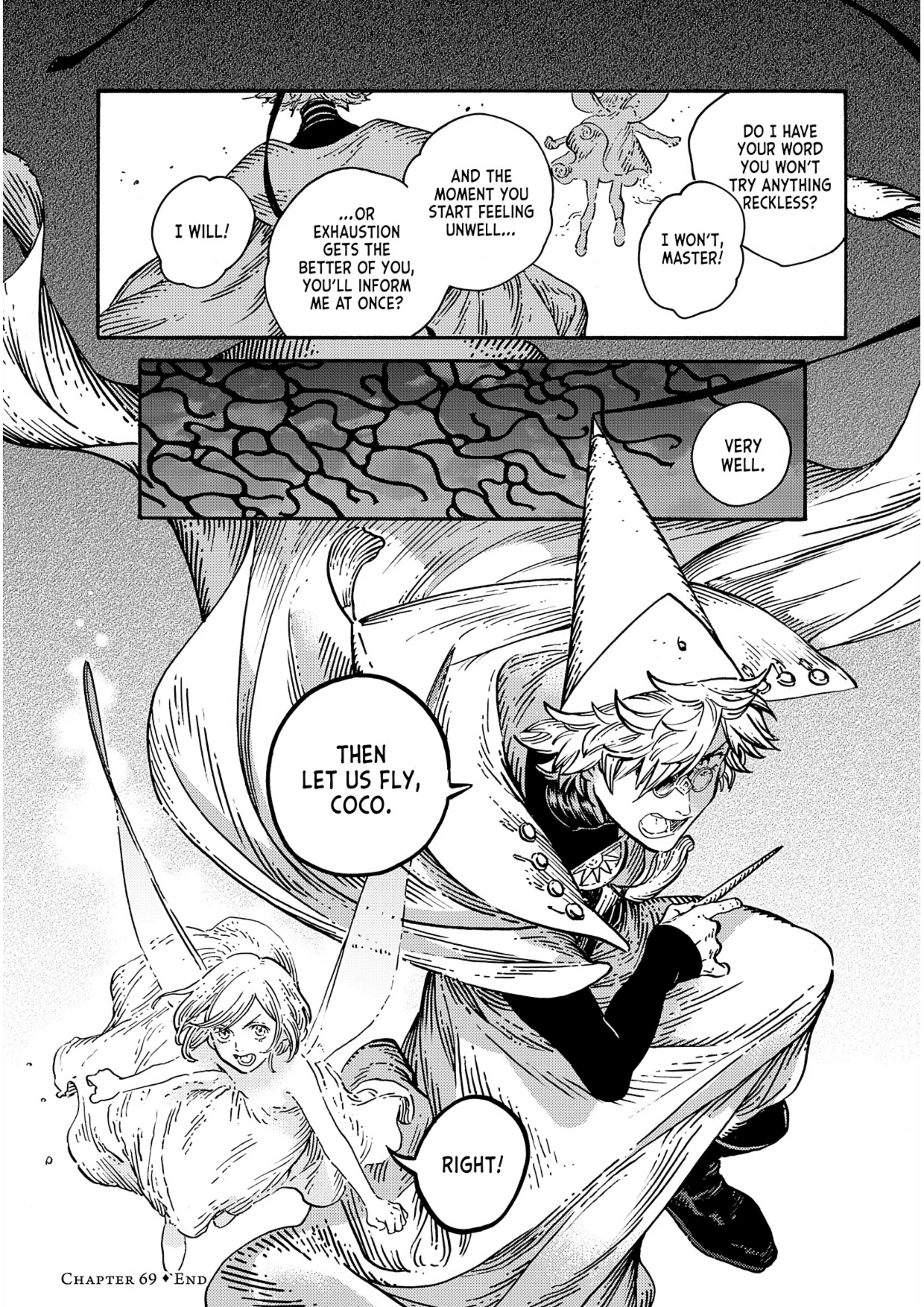
YOU TOLD ME EVERYTHING WOULD BE ALL RIGHT.

THAT THE ANSWER IS OUT THERE, WAITING TO BE FOUND.

THAT WE'D SEARCH TOGETHER.

CUSTAS NEEDS TO HEAR THOSE THINGS, TOO.





Chapter 69 ♦ End

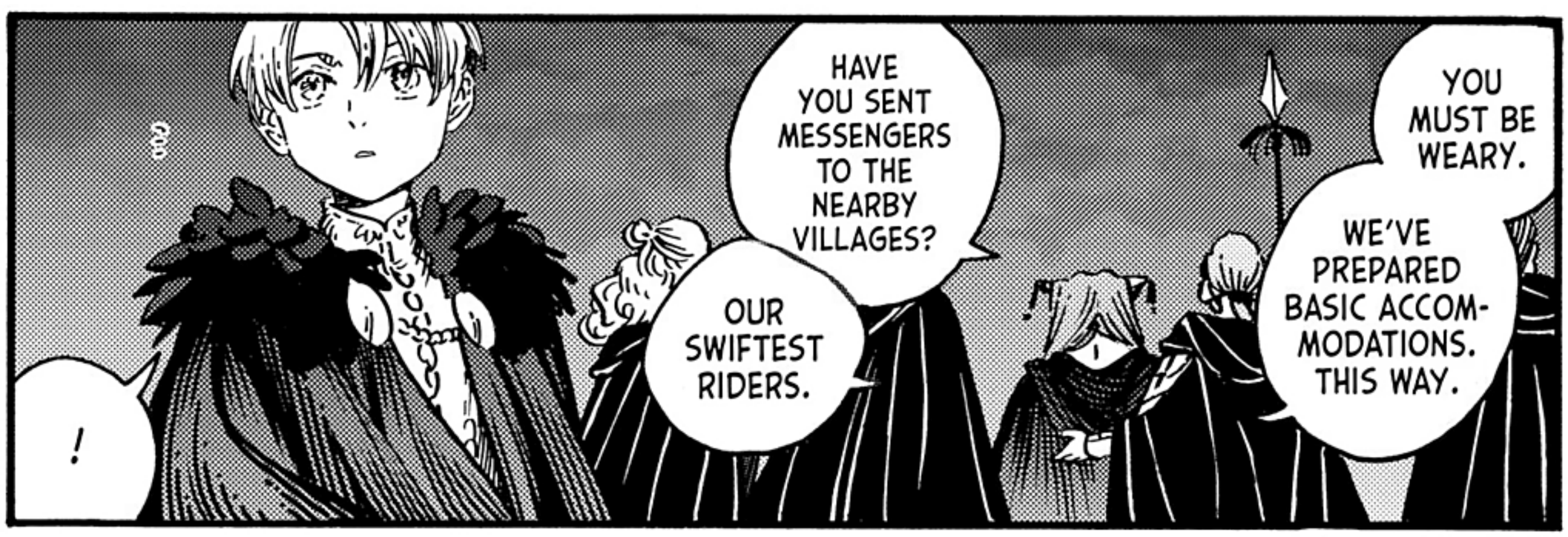
Witch Hat Atelier

Chapter 70

ON A HILL JUST OUTSIDE THE EZREST CITY WALLS...
ZHRF
THANK GOODNESS YOU'RE SAFE! AND THE FIVE RULERS, TOO!
PRINCE EOLEO!
QUEEN ZAYAMAIYA!

WITHOUT THEM, WE'D STILL BE FIGHTING OUR WAY TO FREEDOM.
IT IS THE WITCHES WHO DESERVE OUR THANKS, MAJESTY.

I'M PLEASED TO SEE THE ROYAL GUARD UNSCATHED.
YOU'VE DONE WELL, ESCORTING SO MANY OF OUR CITIZENS TO SAFETY.

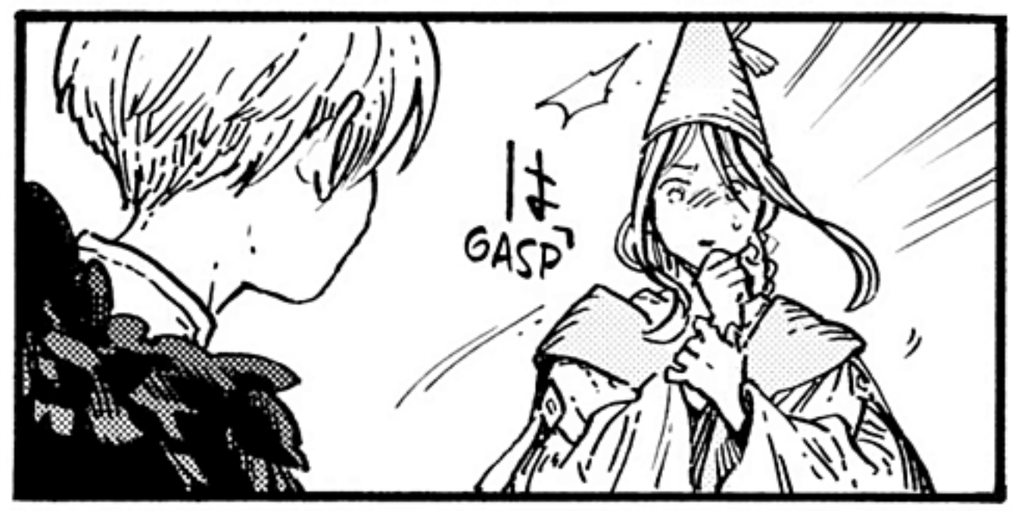

!
HAVE YOU SENT MESSENGERS TO THE NEARBY VILLAGES?
OUR SWIFTEST RIDERS.
YOU MUST BE WEARY.
WE'VE PREPARED BASIC ACCOMMODATIONS. THIS WAY.

...

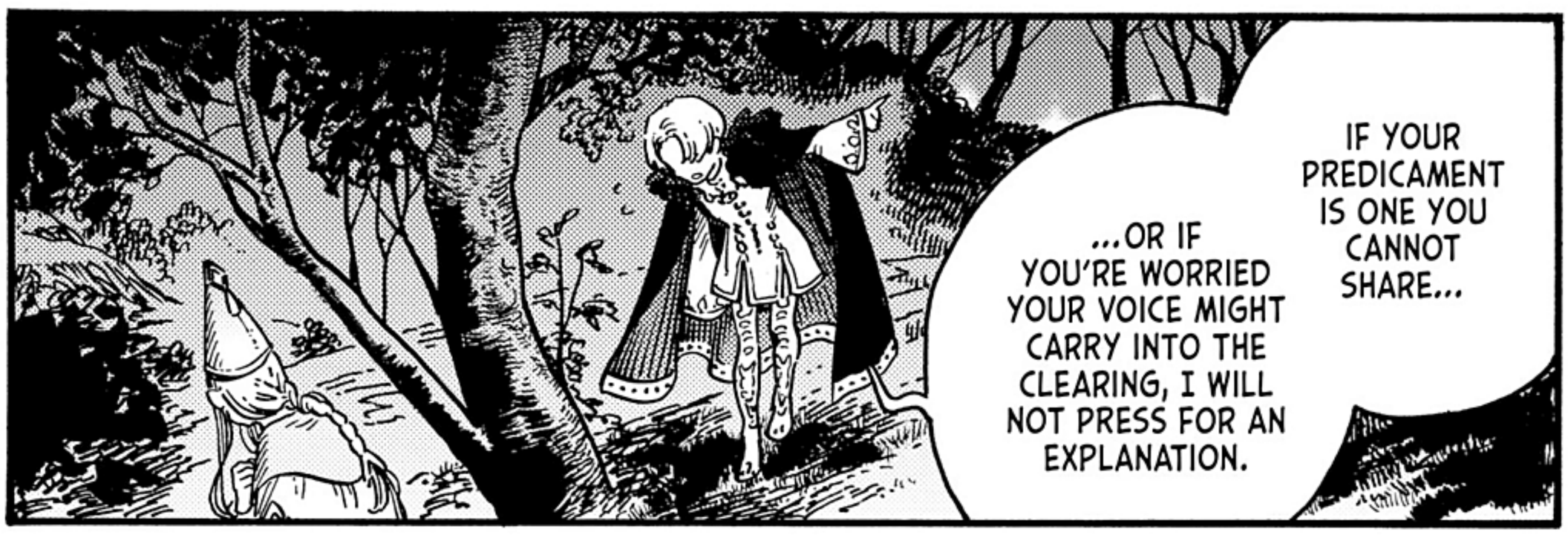
SHF
SH
RF
NOT GOOD...
NOT GOOD AT ALL!
ZSH
ZSH
ZSH
ZSH
HOW COULD I LET MYSELF GET SEPARATED FROM LORD BELDARUIT?!
Why, E'leo There! ☆
WOBBL
HE'S THE ONLY REASON I'VE KEPT IT TOGETHER!
I WOULD HAVE NEVER BRAVED SILVER EVE IF I THOUGHT I MIGHT BE AWAY FROM HIS SIDE!
NOW I'M ALONE...
...IN THE MIDST OF ALL THESE PEOPLE...!

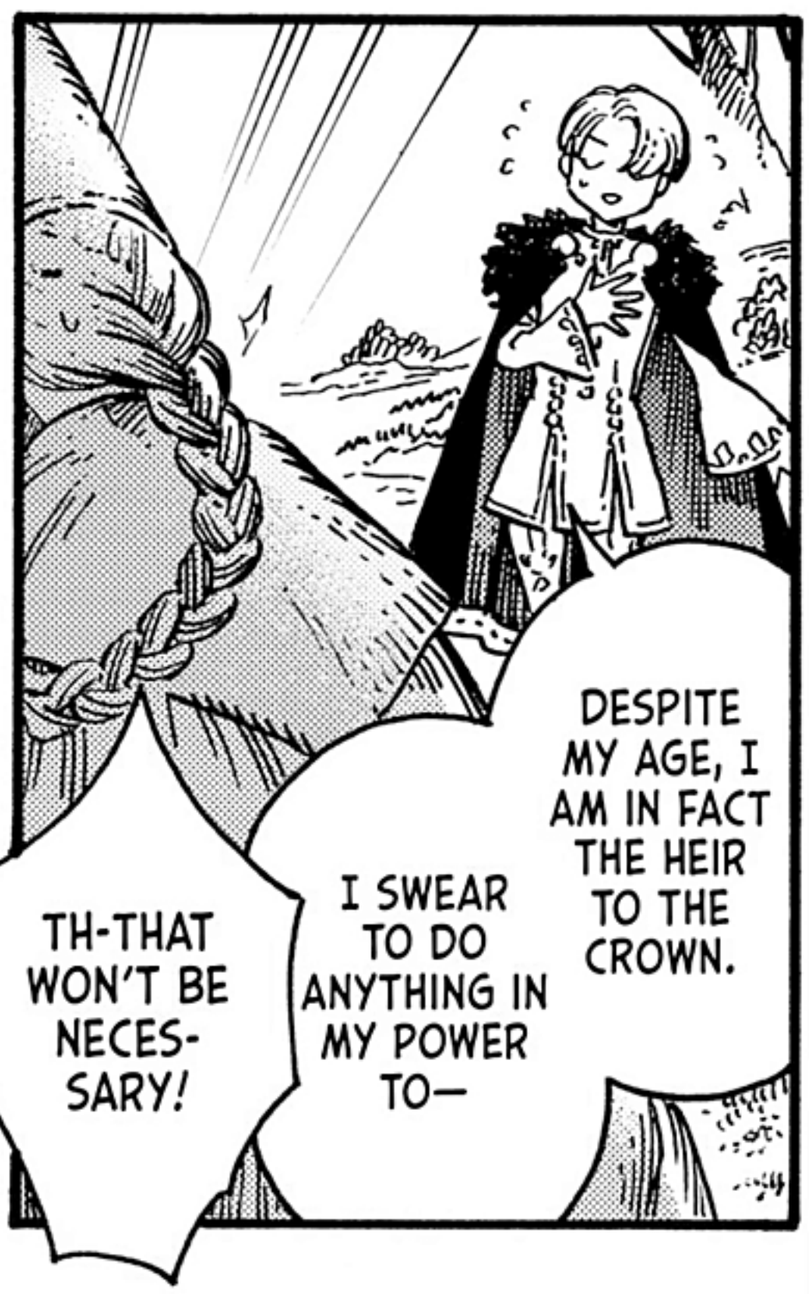
FWIP
IS SOMETHING THE MATTER, SIR WITCH?
!!!
...

IS THERE SOMEONE YOU'RE AVOIDING?
I'M SORRY.


はっ
GASP

ERM...!
はっ!!
TWIRL

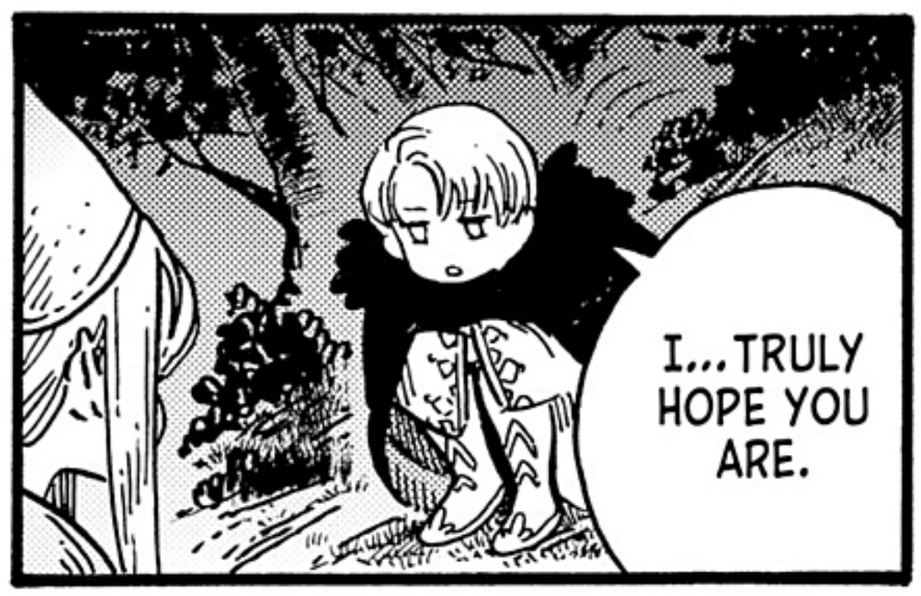

...OR IF YOU'RE WORRIED YOUR VOICE MIGHT CARRY INTO THE CLEARING, I WILL NOT PRESS FOR AN EXPLANATION.
IF YOUR PREDICAMENT IS ONE YOU CANNOT SHARE...

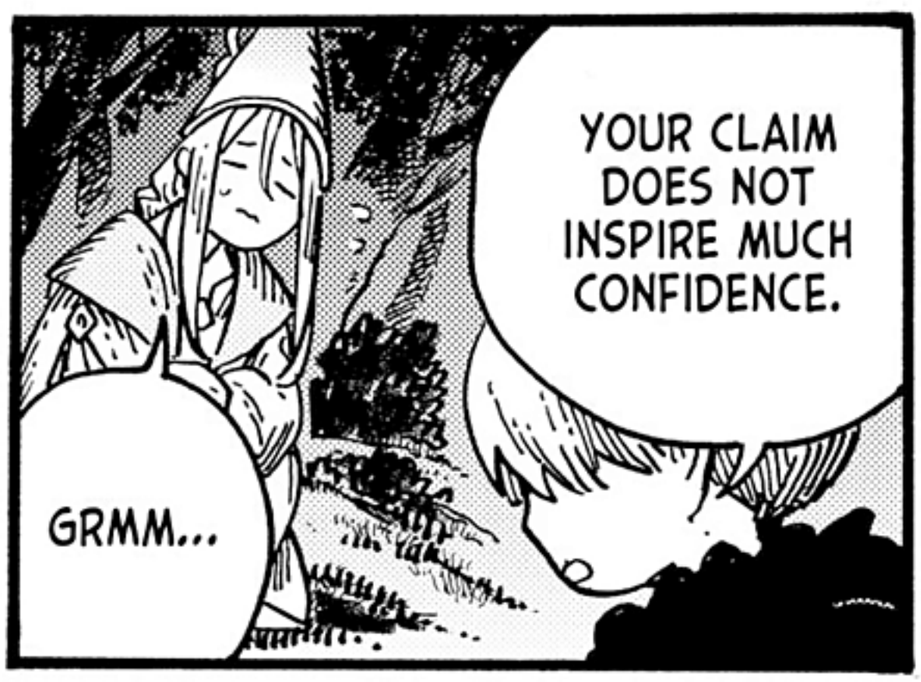

TH-THAT WON'T BE NECES-SARY!
I SWEAR TO DO ANYTHING IN MY POWER TO—
DESPITE MY AGE, I AM IN FACT THE HEIR TO THE CROWN.

BUT IF YOU REQUIRE ASSISTANCE, PERHAPS YOU COULD PROVIDE A SIGNAL.
SIMPLY MAKE A FIST WITH YOUR THUMB TUCKED INSIDE, AND I'LL KNOW.

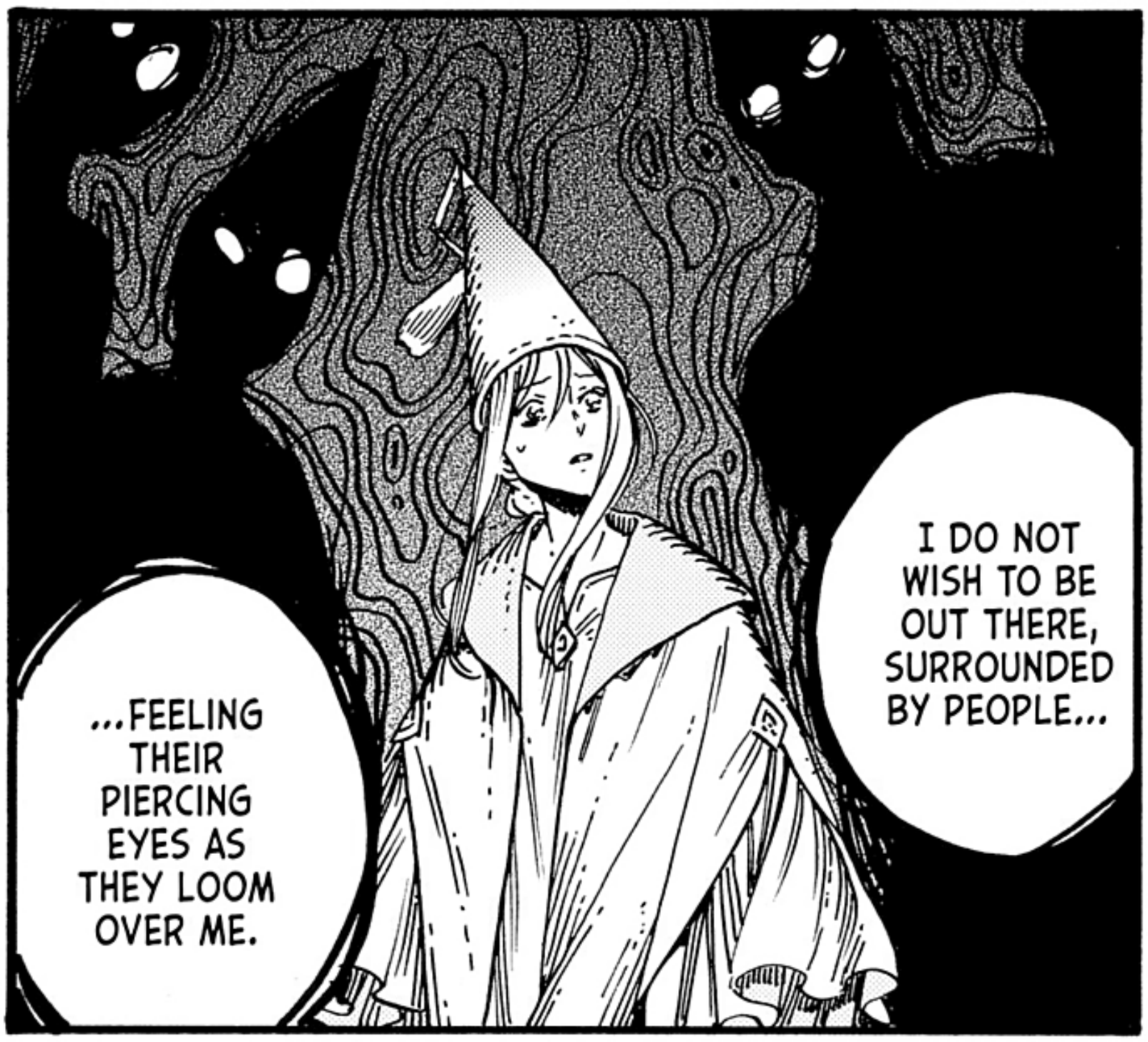
I... I'VE HAD THEM FOR...
...MANY YEARS, IN FACT.

THESE SCARS ARE... ANYTHING BUT RECENT, GOOD PRINCE.
PLEASE... DO NOT MIS-UNDERSTAND.

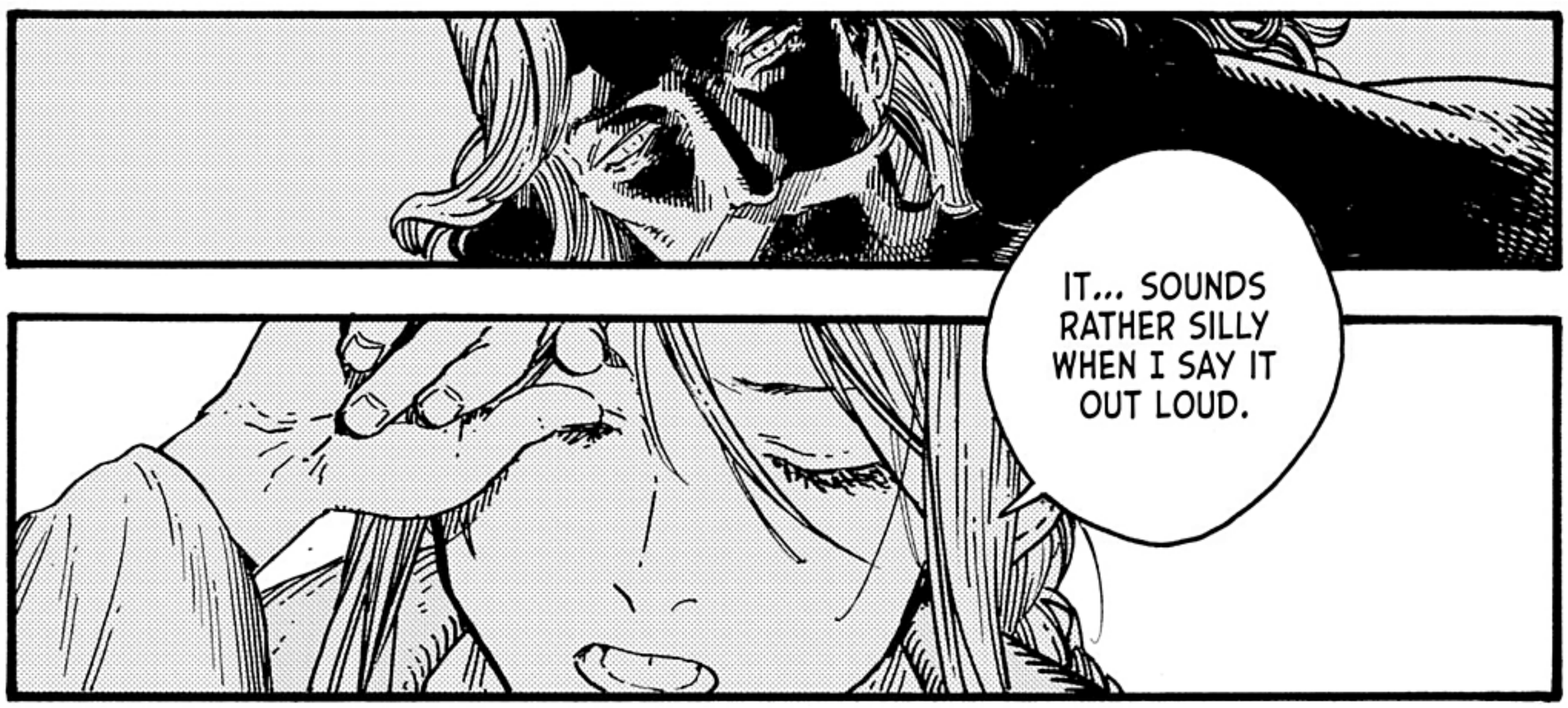

I...TRULY HOPE YOU ARE.

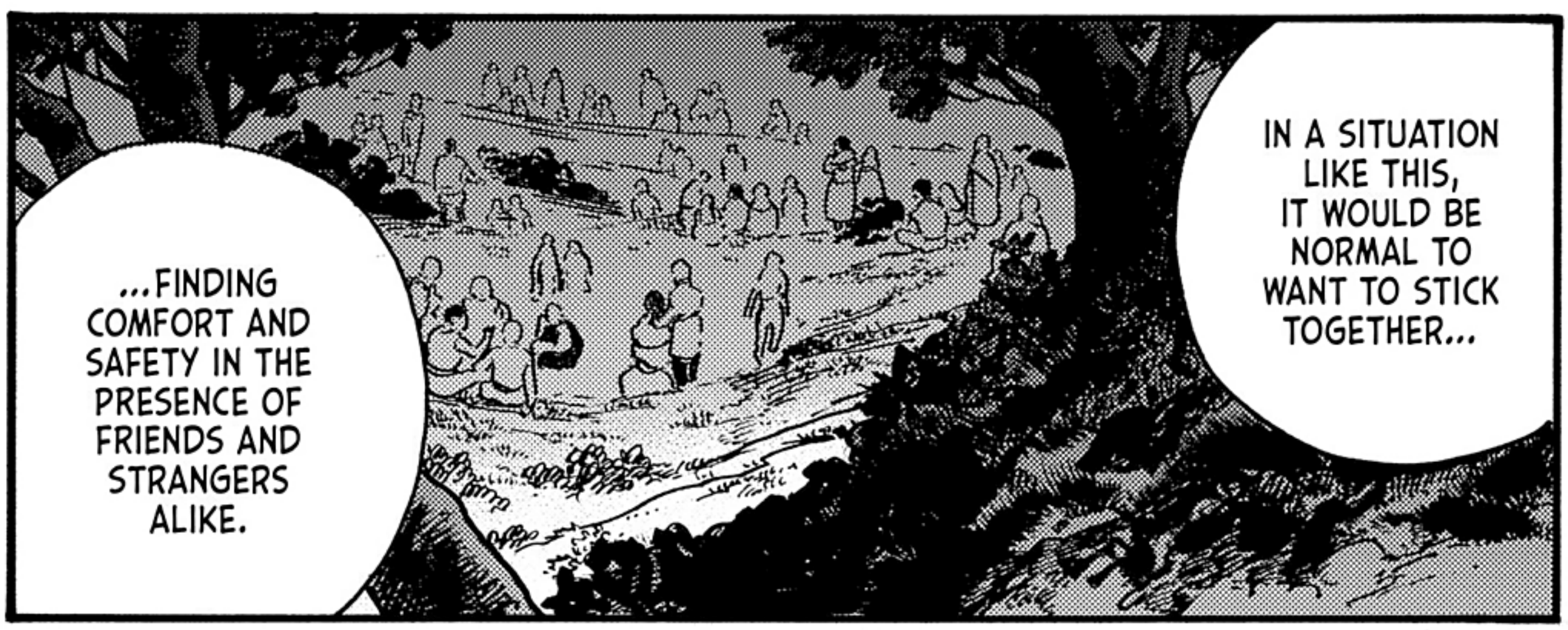

YOUR CLAIM DOES NOT INSPIRE MUCH CONFIDENCE.
GRMM...

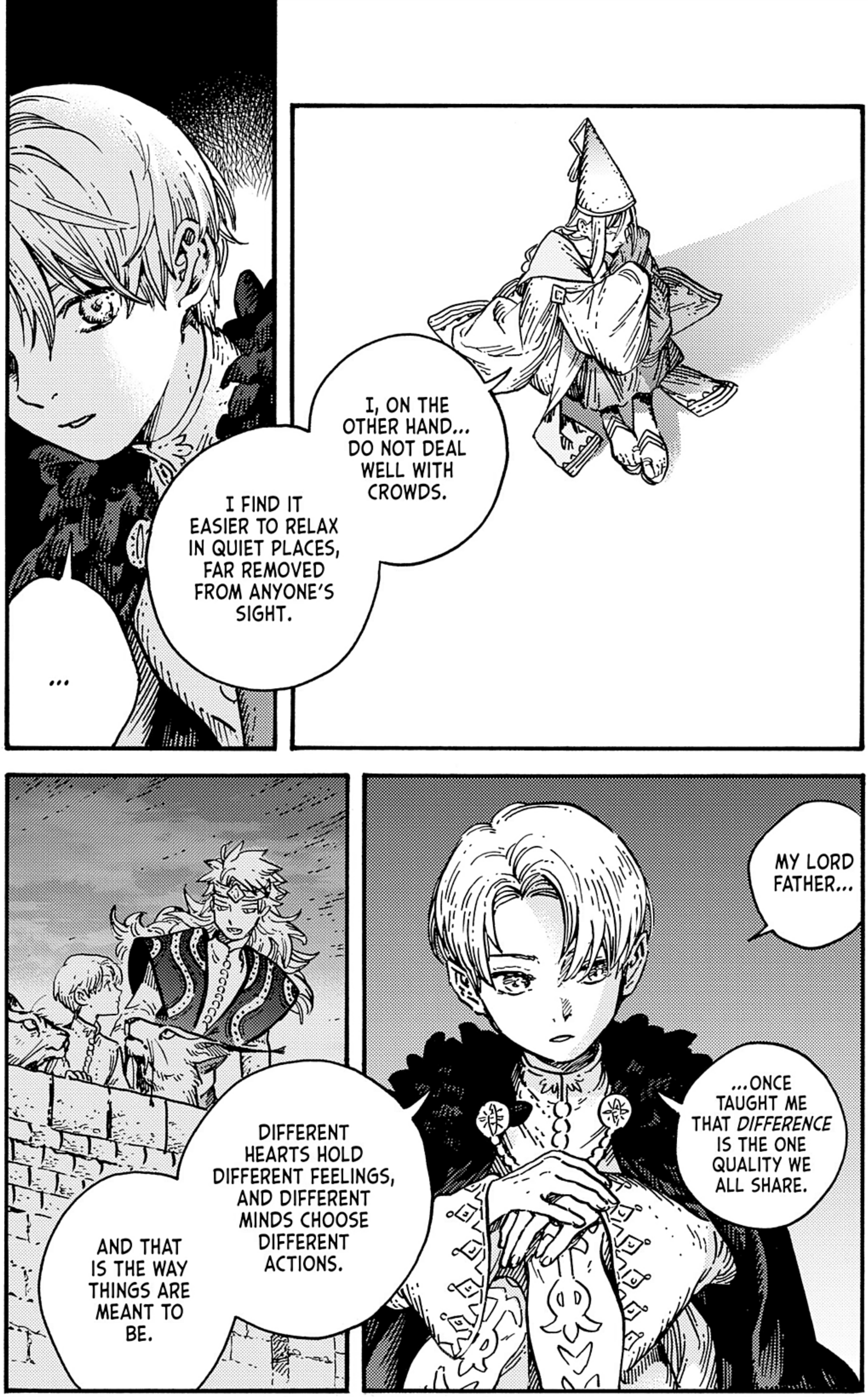
I SHOULD BE QUITE FINE NOW. PROBABLY. I THINK.
I APOLOGIZE IF I CAUSED ANY ALARM.

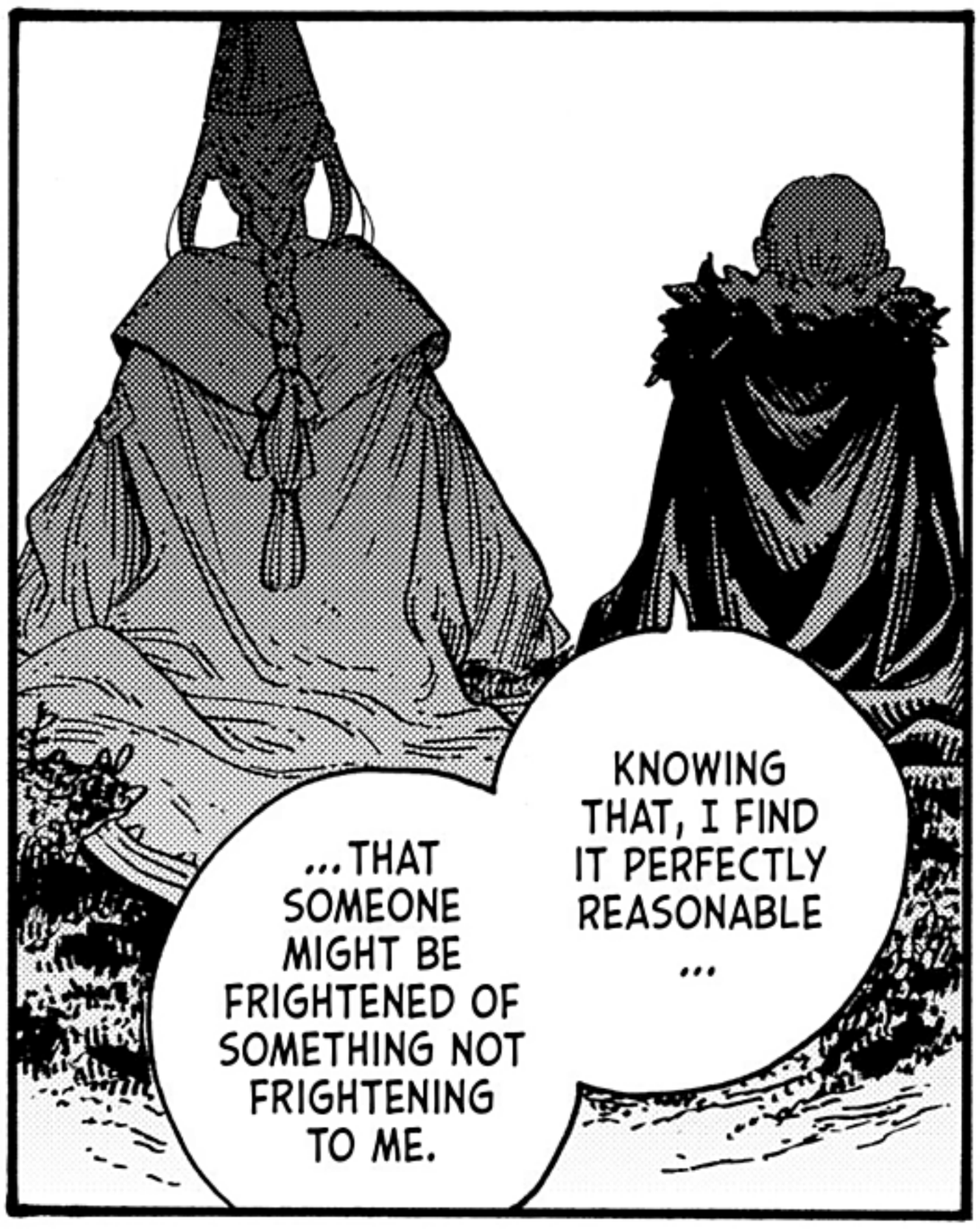

...FEELING THEIR PIERCING EYES AS THEY LOOM OVER ME.
I DO NOT WISH TO BE OUT THERE, SURROUNDED BY PEOPLE...

TH-THE TRUTH IS, I'M SIMPLY FRIGHT-ENED.

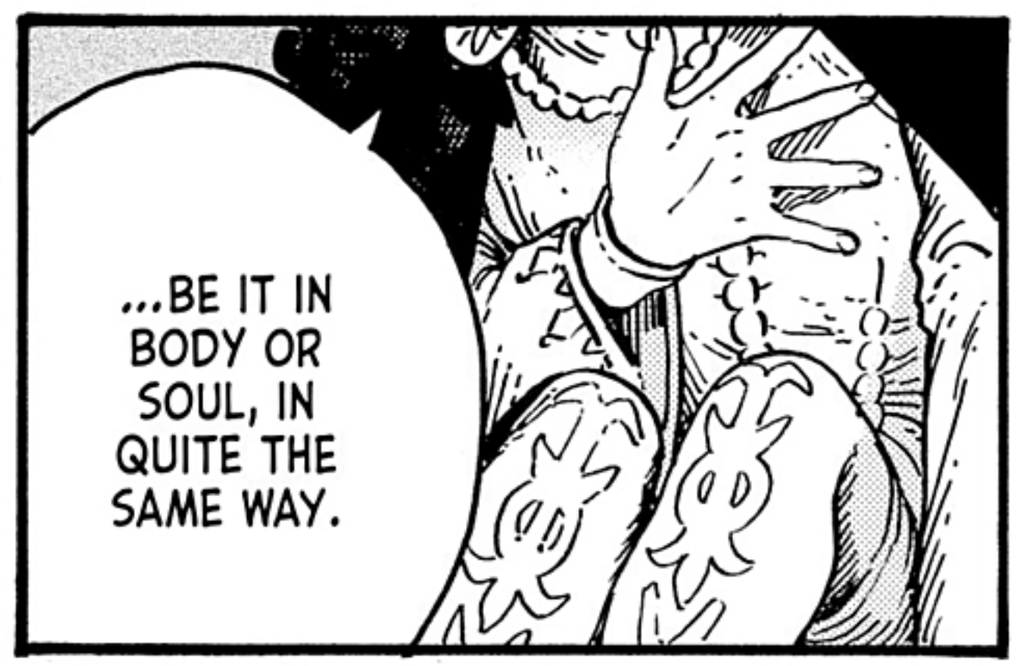

IT... SOUNDS RATHER SILLY WHEN I SAY IT OUT LOUD.

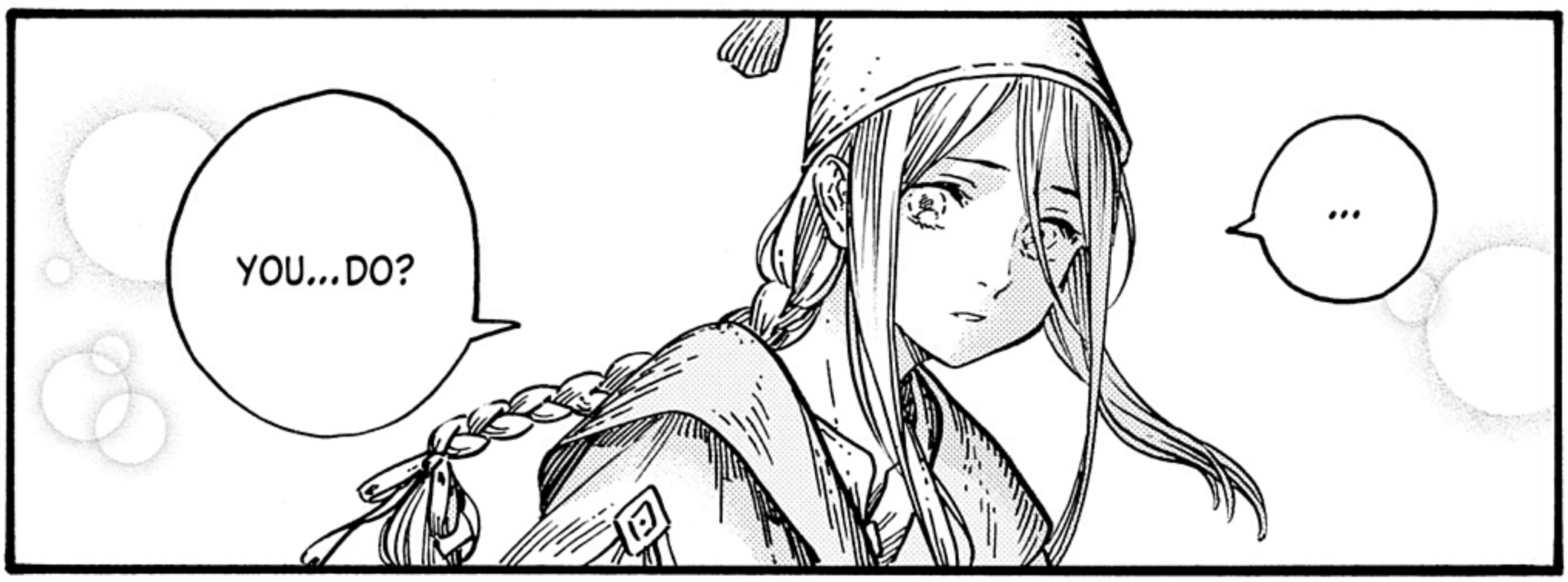

...FINDING COMFORT AND SAFETY IN THE PRESENCE OF FRIENDS AND STRANGERS ALIKE.
IN A SITUATION LIKE THIS, IT WOULD BE NORMAL TO WANT TO STICK TOGETHER...

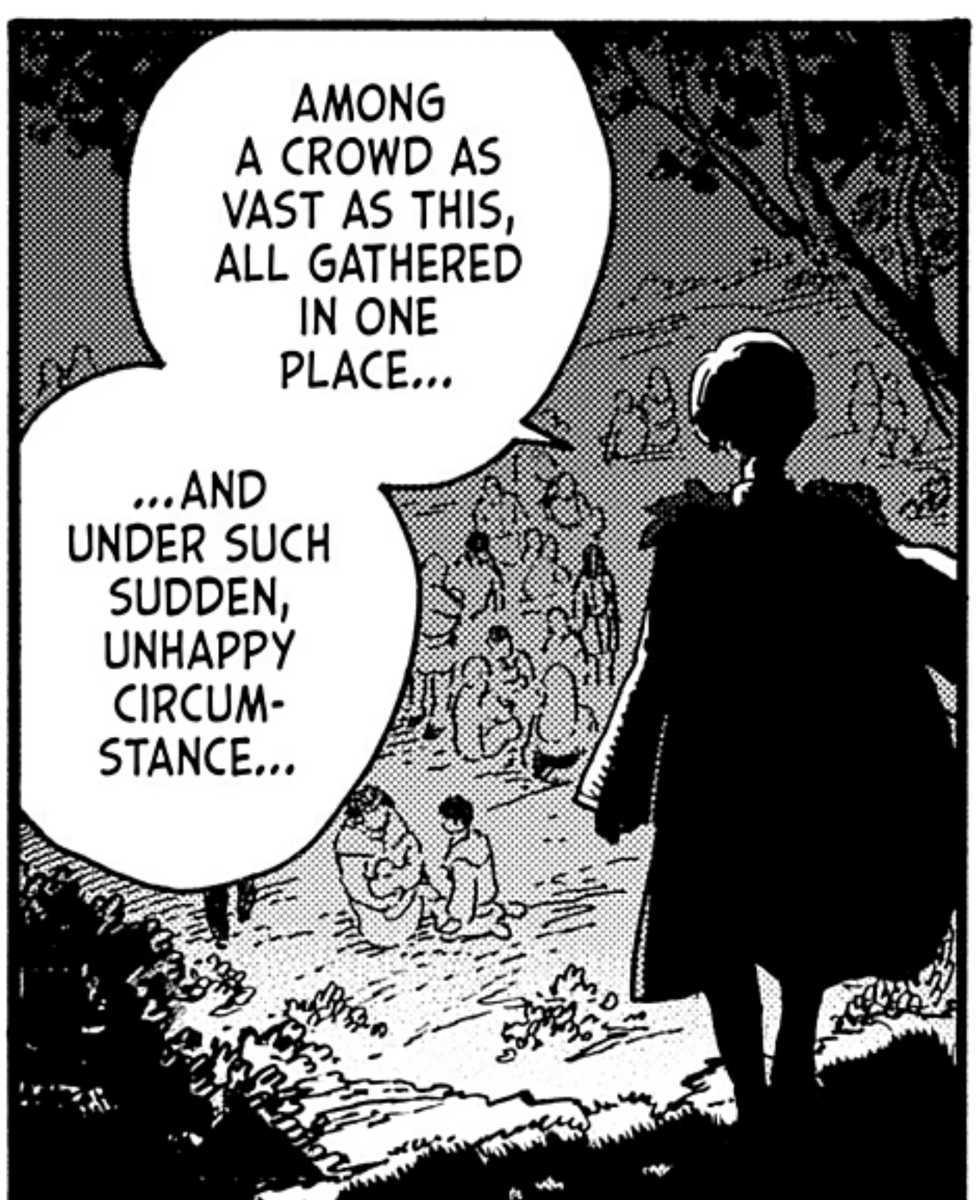

...
I FIND IT EASIER TO RELAX IN QUIET PLACES, FAR REMOVED FROM ANYONE'S SIGHT.
I, ON THE OTHER HAND... DO NOT DEAL WELL WITH CROWDS.
AND THAT IS THE WAY THINGS ARE MEANT TO BE.
DIFFERENT HEARTS HOLD DIFFERENT FEELINGS, AND DIFFERENT MINDS CHOOSE DIFFERENT ACTIONS.
MY LORD FATHER...
...ONCE TAUGHT ME THAT *DIFFERENCE* IS THE ONE QUALITY WE ALL SHARE.

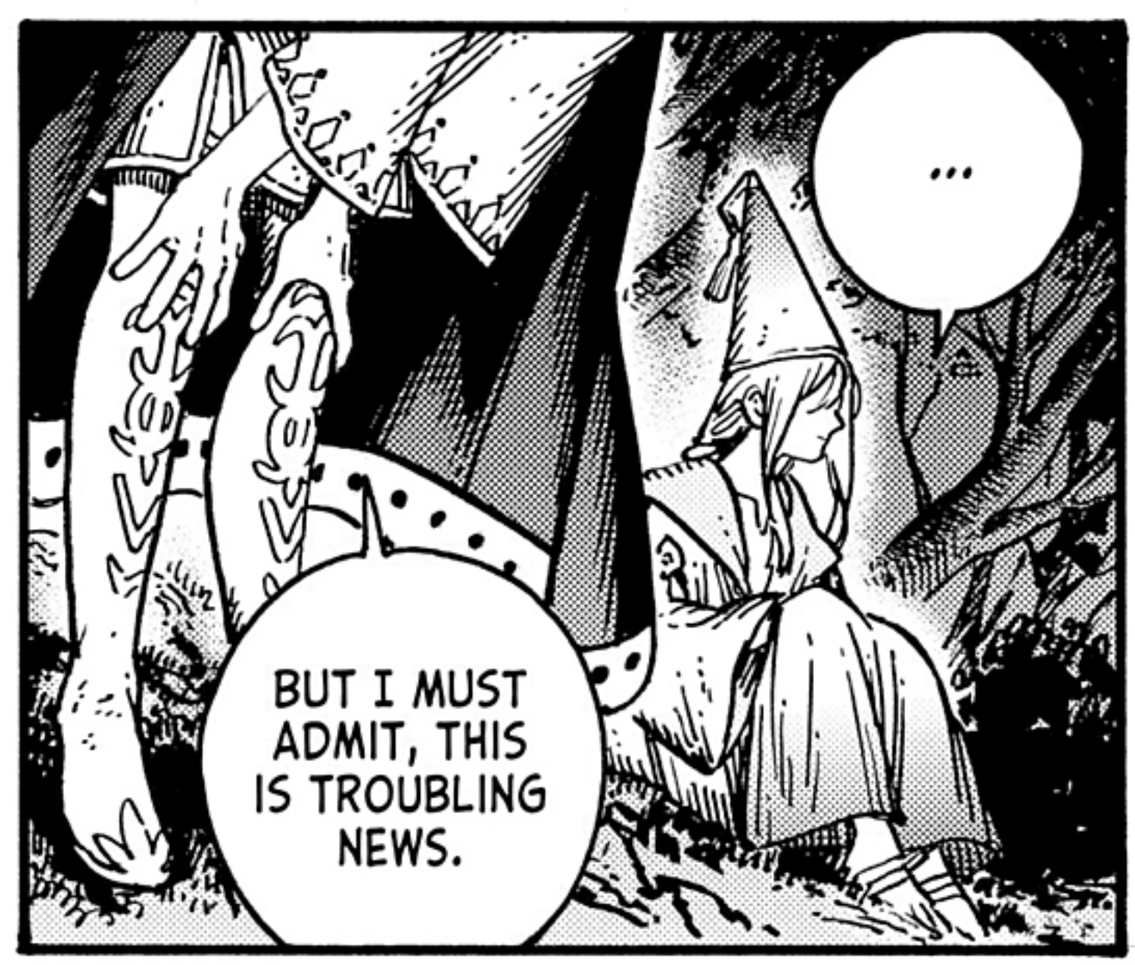

...THAT SOMEONE MIGHT BE FRIGHTENED OF SOMETHING NOT FRIGHTENING TO ME.
KNOWING THAT, I FIND IT PERFECTLY REASONABLE ...

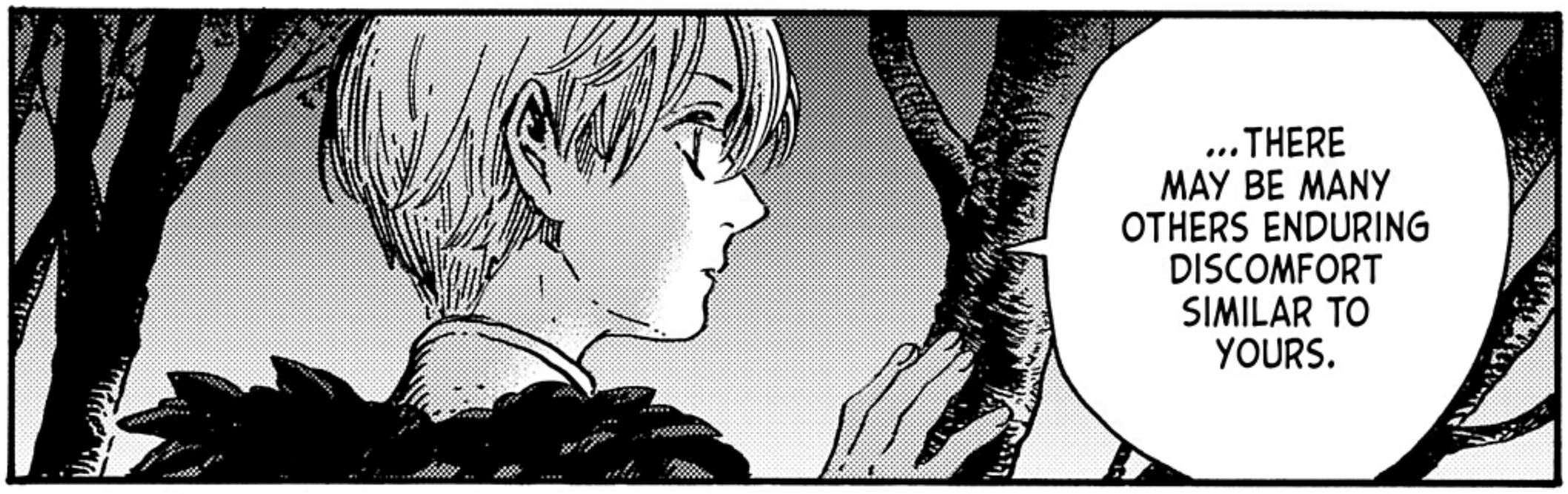
HE ALSO SAID THAT NO TWO OF US EXPERIENCE SUFFERING...

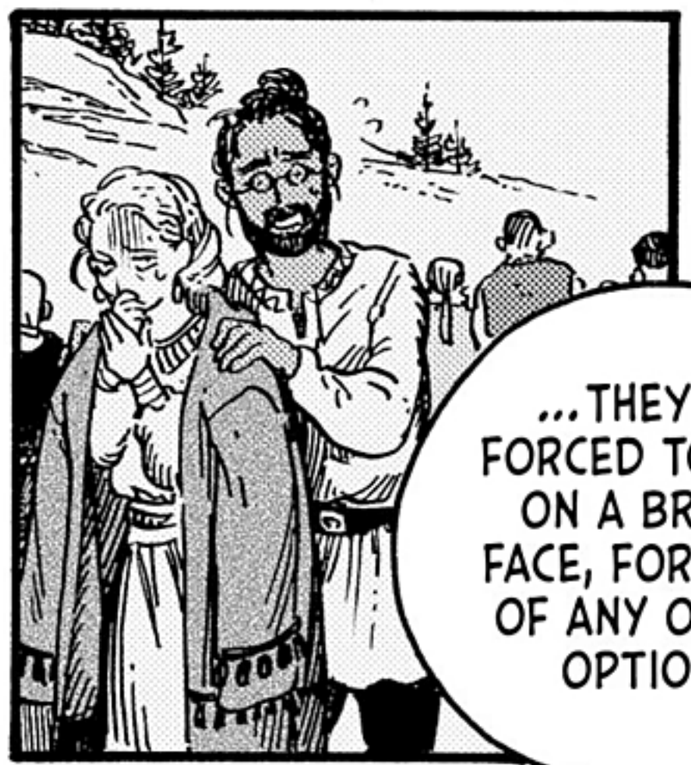

...BE IT IN BODY OR SOUL, IN QUITE THE SAME WAY.


YOU...DO?
...

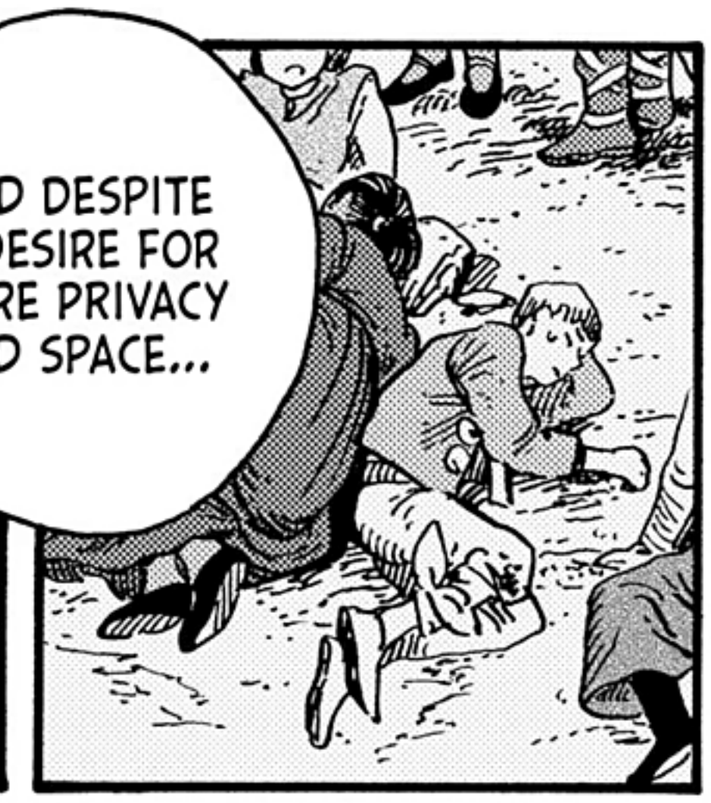

AMONG A CROWD AS VAST AS THIS, ALL GATHERED IN ONE PLACE...
...AND UNDER SUCH SUDDEN, UNHAPPY CIRCUM-STANCE...

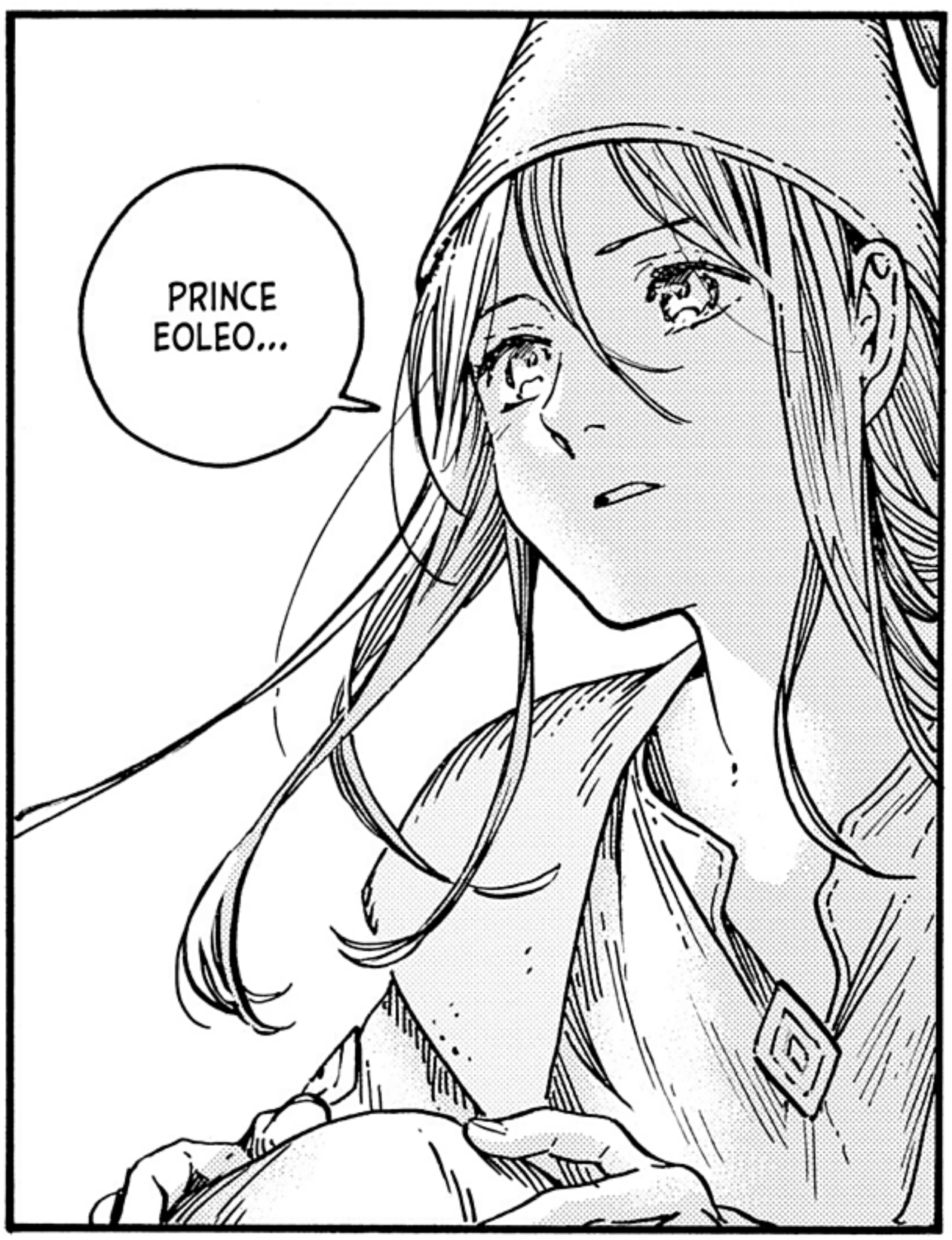

...
BUT I MUST ADMIT, THIS IS TROUBLING NEWS.


...THERE MAY BE MANY OTHERS ENDURING DISCOMFORT SIMILAR TO YOURS.


...THEY'RE FORCED TO PUT ON A BRAVE FACE, FOR LACK OF ANY OTHER OPTION.

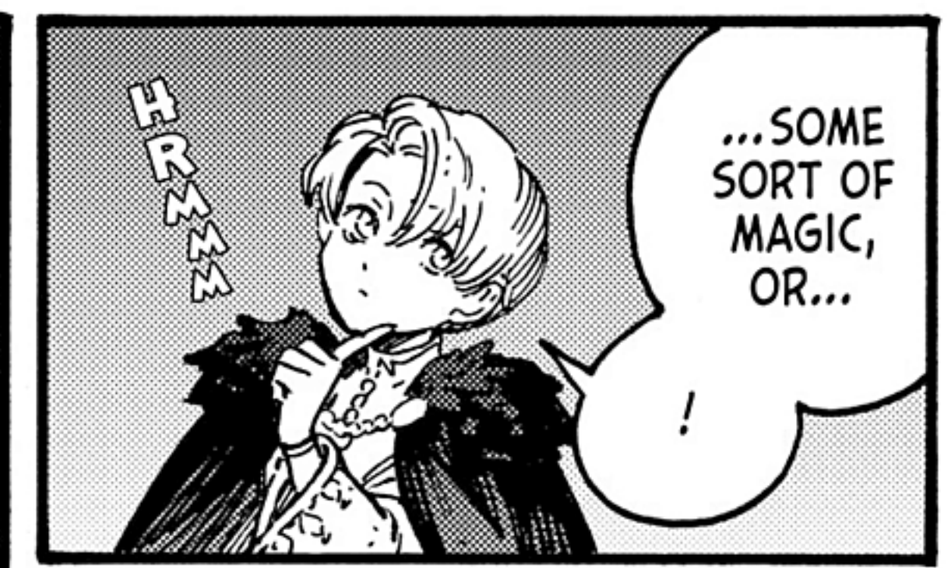
WAAA AAA AAA AAH
Peek-a-boo!

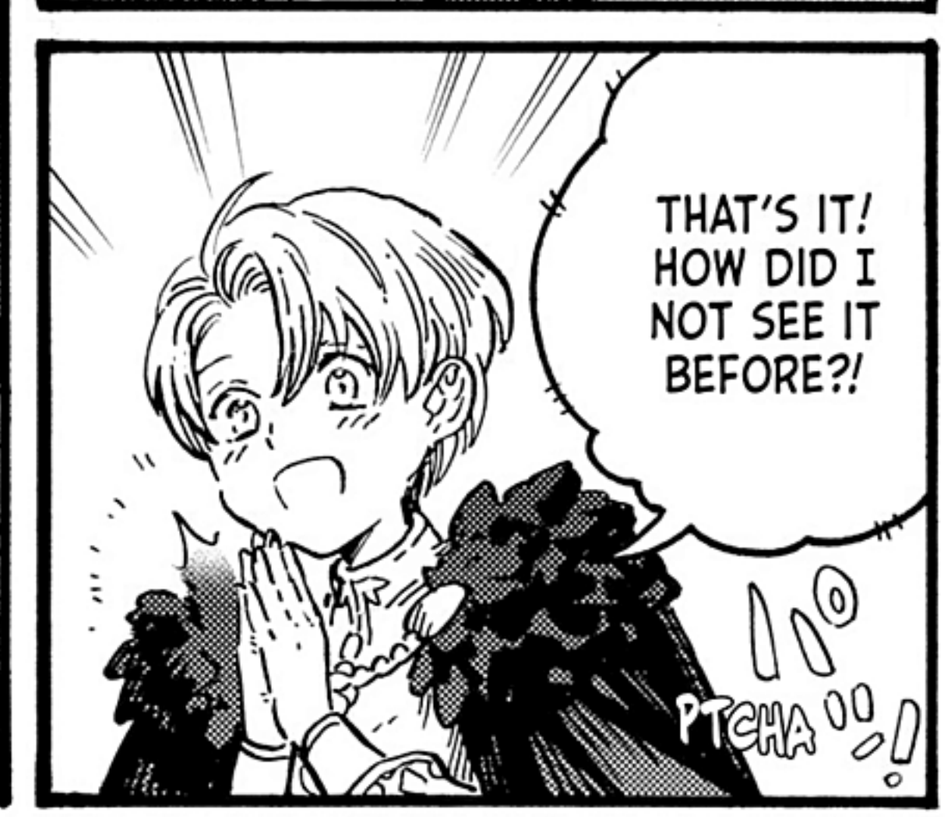

AND DESPITE A DESIRE FOR MORE PRIVACY AND SPACE...

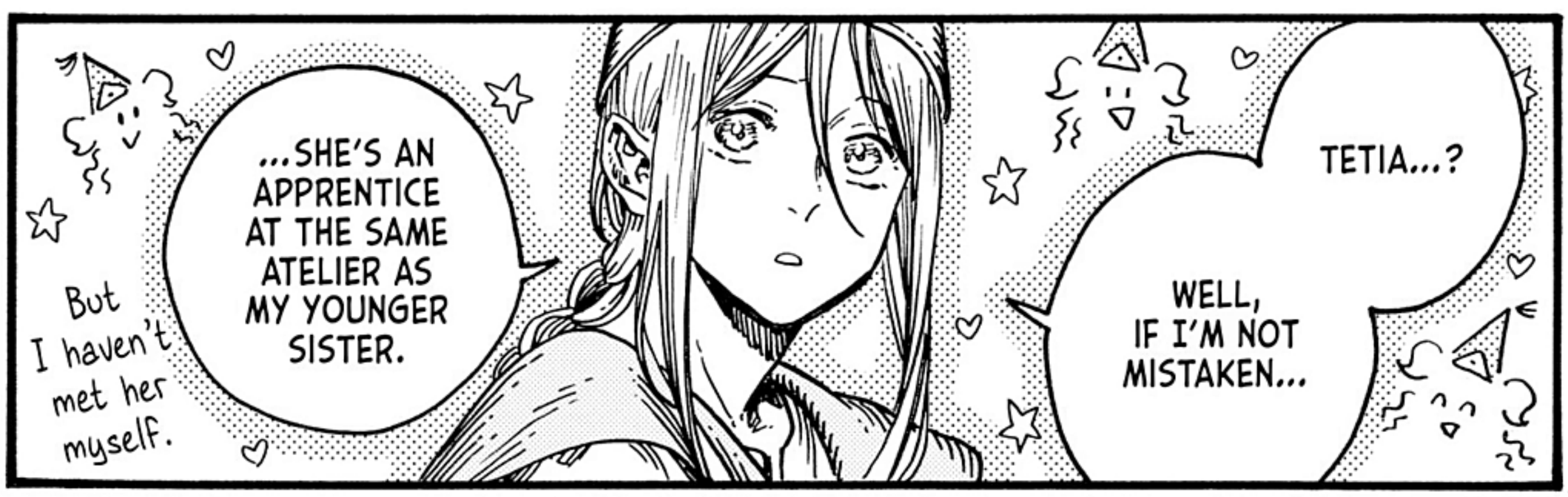

PRINCE EOLEO...

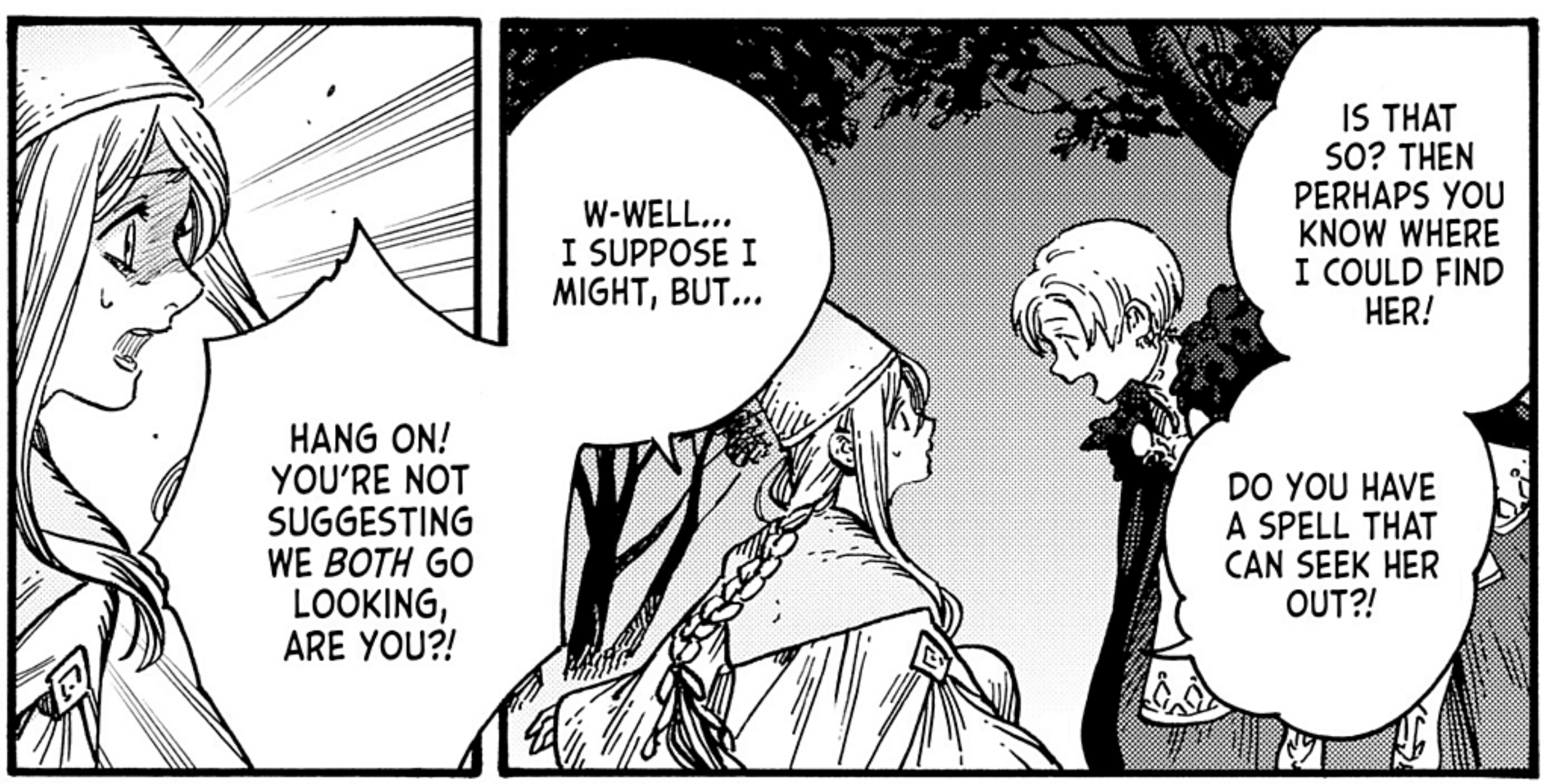
IF ONLY THERE WERE SOMETHING WE COULD DO...

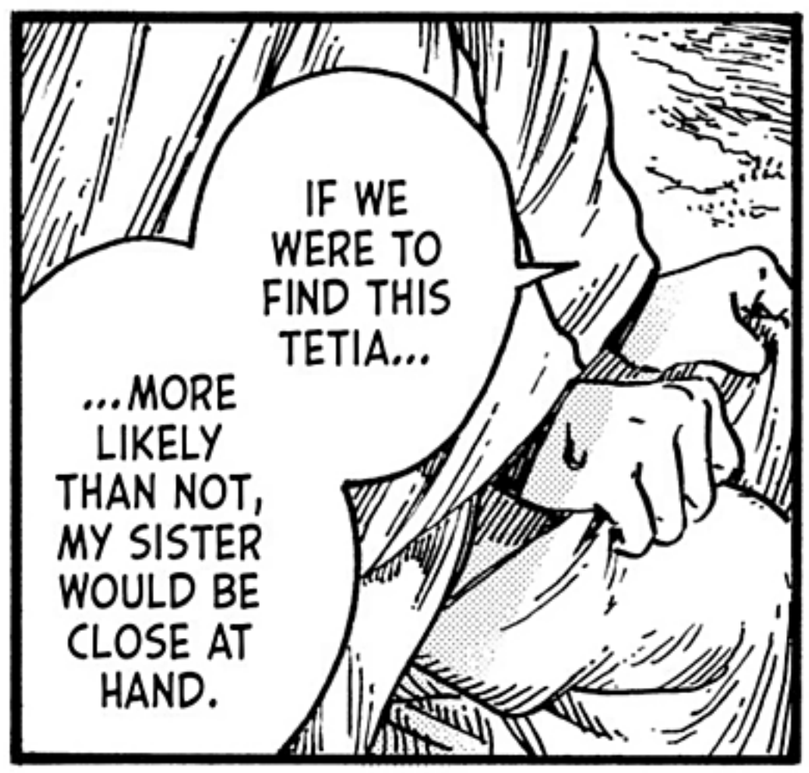
TWIRL
MIGHT I ASK IF YOU'RE ACQUAINTED WITH A WITCH BY THE NAME OF TETIA?

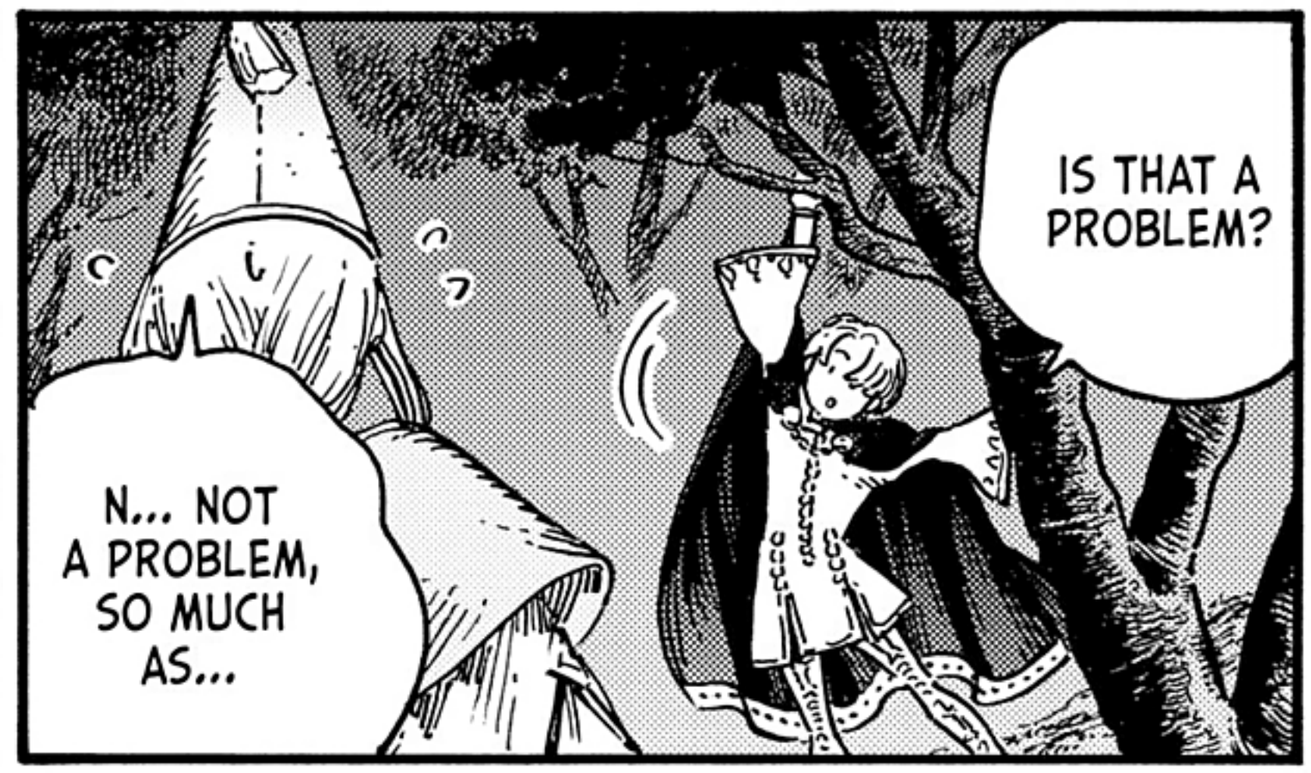

HRMMM
...SOME SORT OF MAGIC, OR...
!

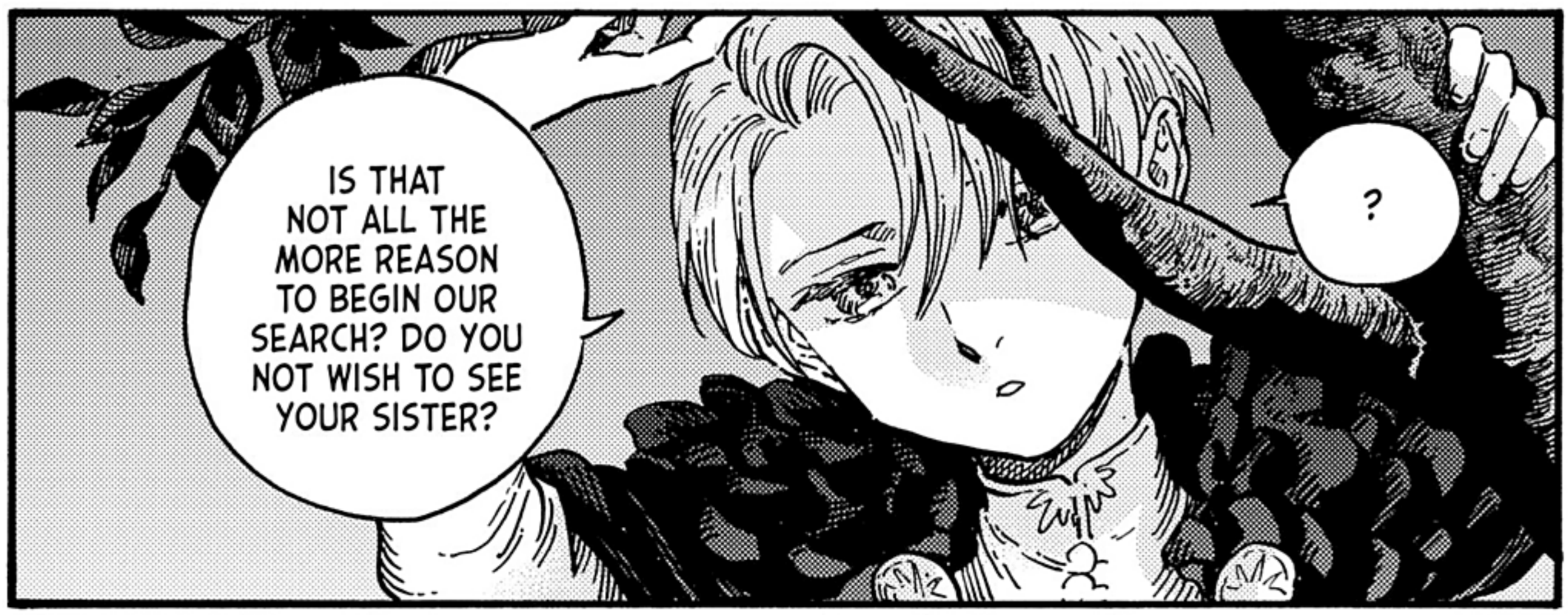

THAT'S IT! HOW DID I NOT SEE IT BEFORE?!
PTCHA!!

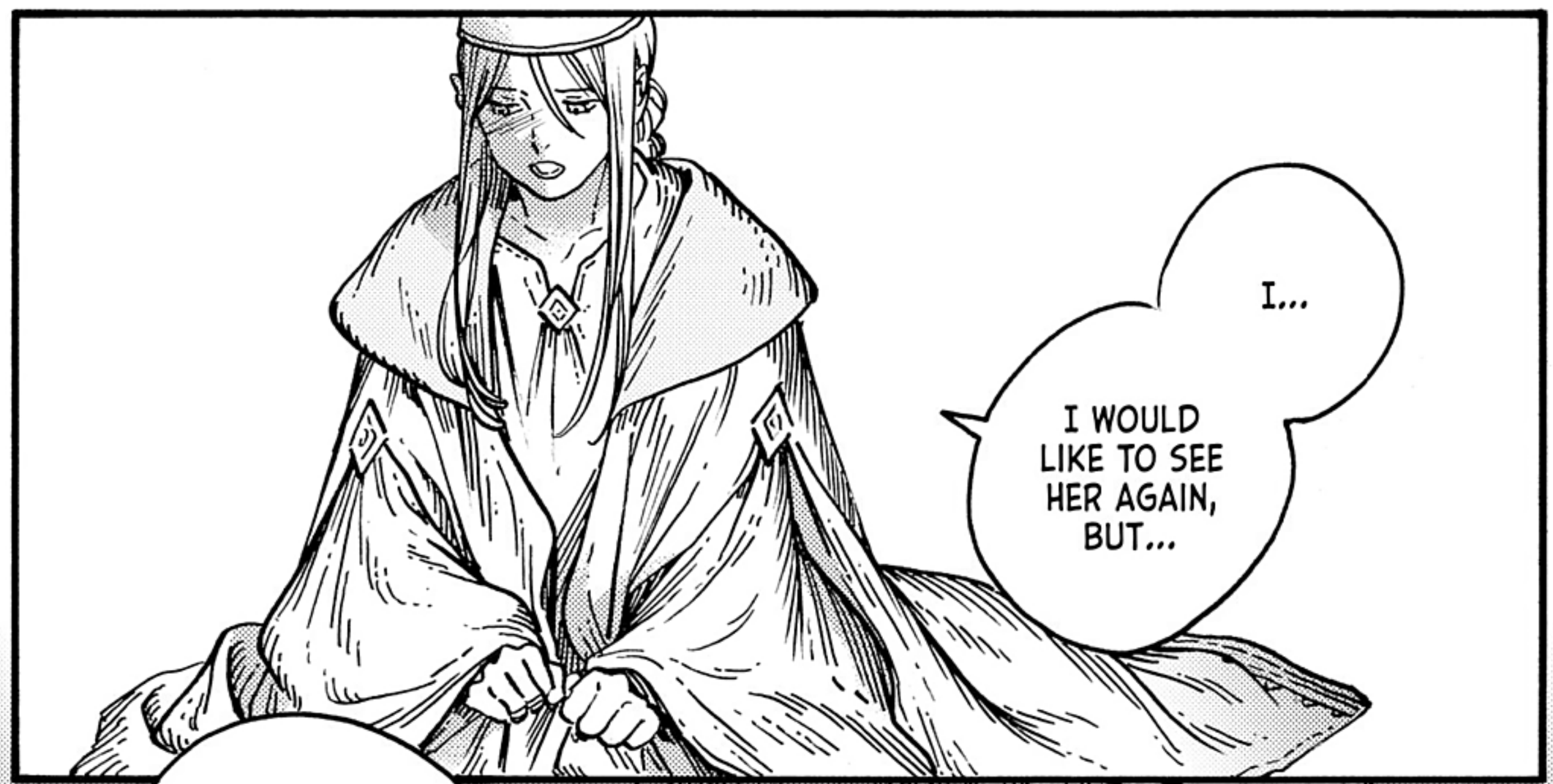

But I haven't met her myself.
...SHE'S AN APPRENTICE AT THE SAME ATELIER AS MY YOUNGER SISTER.
TETIA...?
WELL, IF I'M NOT MISTAKEN...

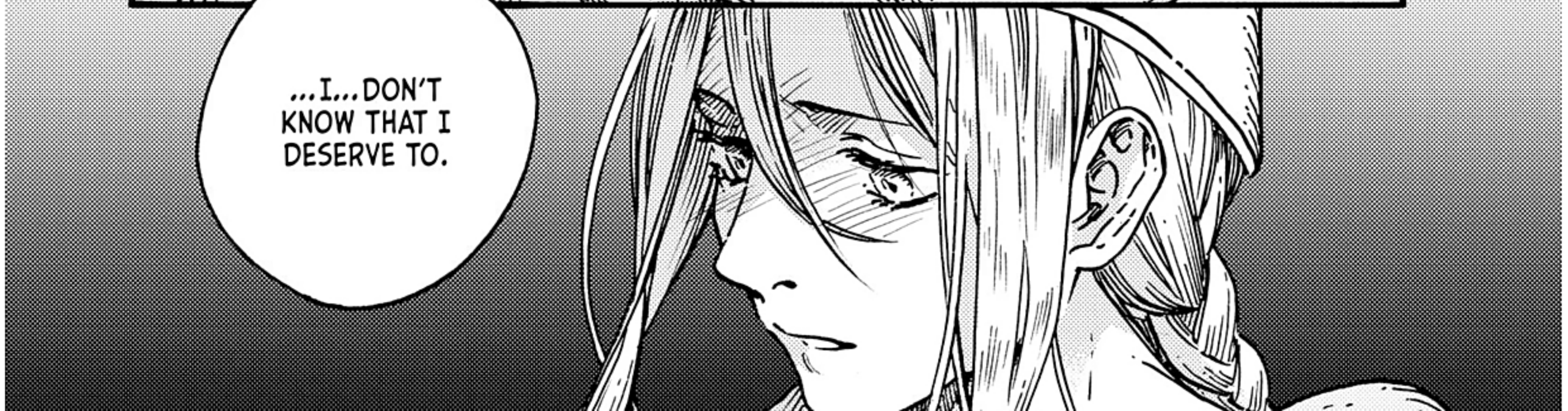

HANG ON! YOU'RE NOT SUGGESTING WE *BOTH* GO LOOKING, ARE YOU?!
W-WELL... I SUPPOSE I MIGHT, BUT...
IS THAT SO? THEN PERHAPS YOU KNOW WHERE I COULD FIND HER!
DO YOU HAVE A SPELL THAT CAN SEEK HER OUT?!


IF WE WERE TO FIND THIS TETIA...
...MORE LIKELY THAN NOT, MY SISTER WOULD BE CLOSE AT HAND.


N... NOT A PROBLEM, SO MUCH AS...
IS THAT A PROBLEM?


IS THAT NOT ALL THE MORE REASON TO BEGIN OUR SEARCH? DO YOU NOT WISH TO SEE YOUR SISTER?
?


I...
I WOULD LIKE TO SEE HER AGAIN, BUT...


...I...DON'T KNOW THAT I DESERVE TO.

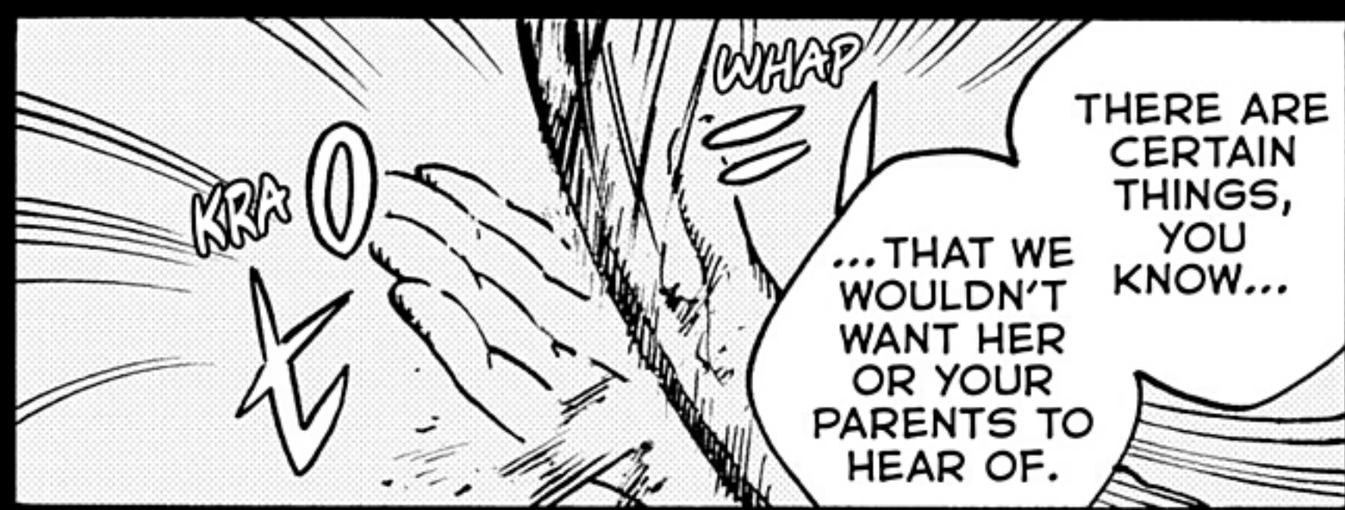
SHE COULD STUDY HERE WITHOUT EVER KNOWING THE SWITCH'S STING.
HITTY
KRA WHAK
...I MIGHT EVEN BE CONVINCED TO SPARE YOUR SISTER.
AND IF YOU BEHAVE YOUR-SELF...
WHAK
SO, RILIPHIN? DO I HAVE YOUR WORD?
BUT WHILE I CLUNG TO SILENCE...
...MY SISTER WAS MADE OF STERNER STUFF.
I FEARED THE PAIN.
I FEARED MY MASTER.

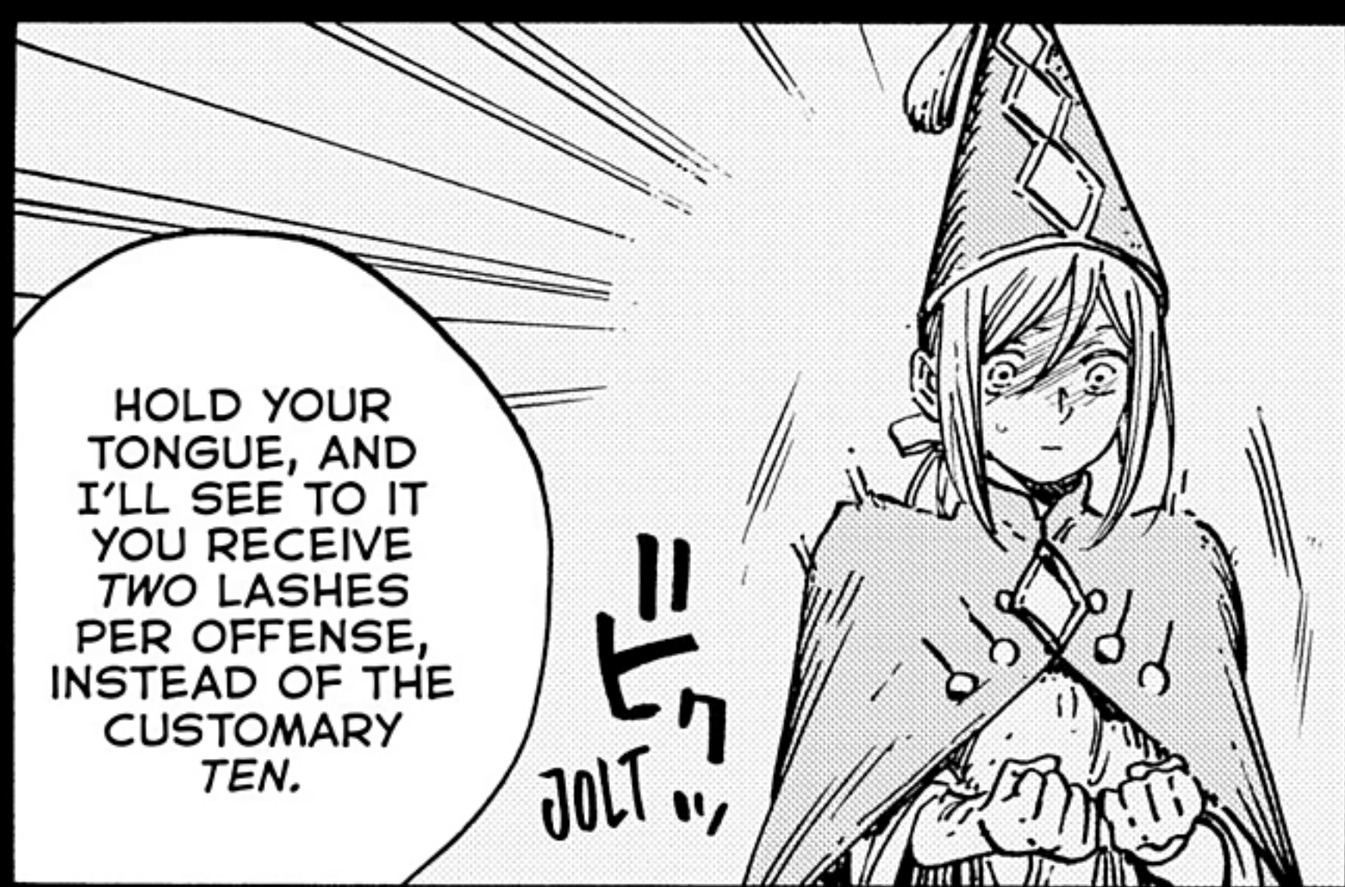
THE MASTER I USED TO STUDY UNDER...

...HAD MANY APPRENTICES AND LITTLE TIME FOR EACH.

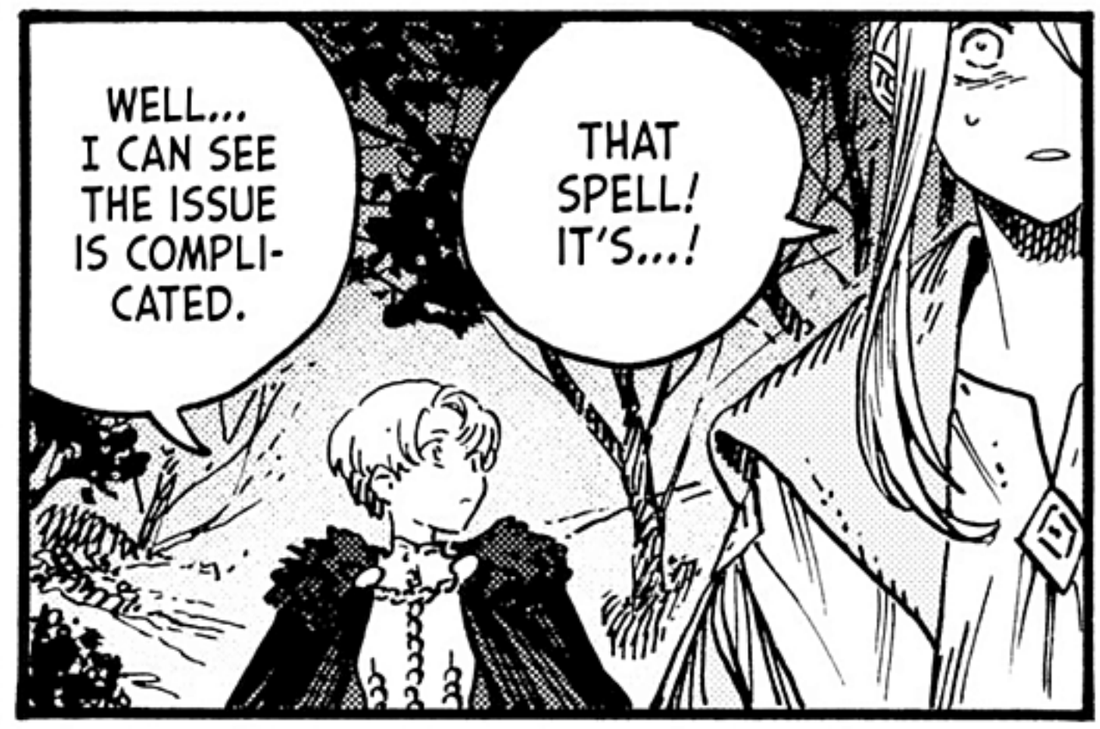
EXCEPT WHEN IT CAME TO HIS NOTION OF DISCIPLINE...

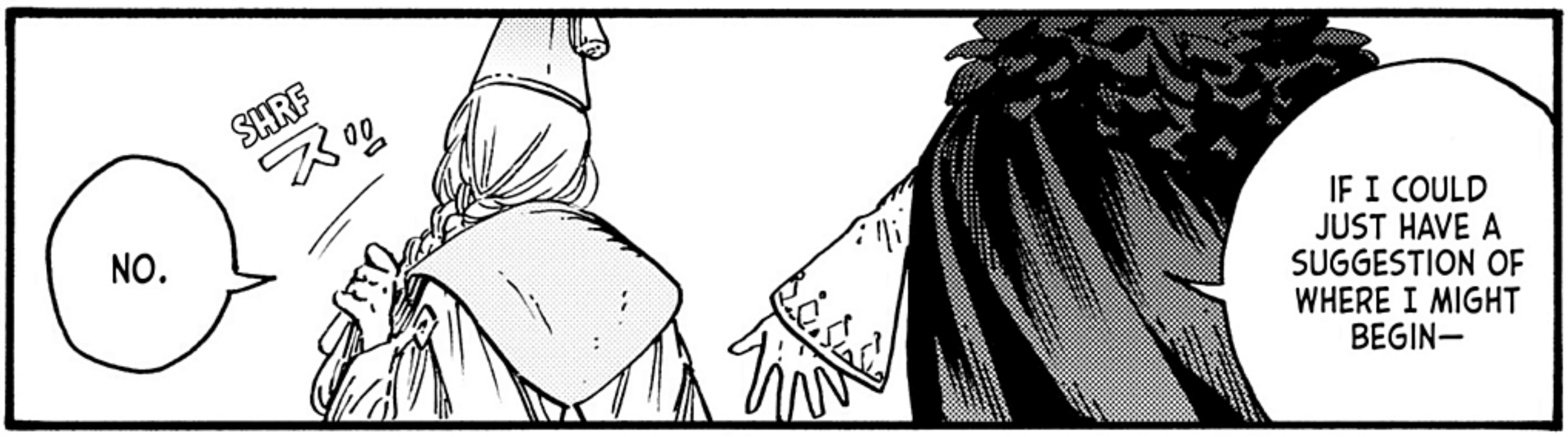
...AND THE TWISTED PLEASURE HE SEEMED TO FIND IN DOLING IT OUT.

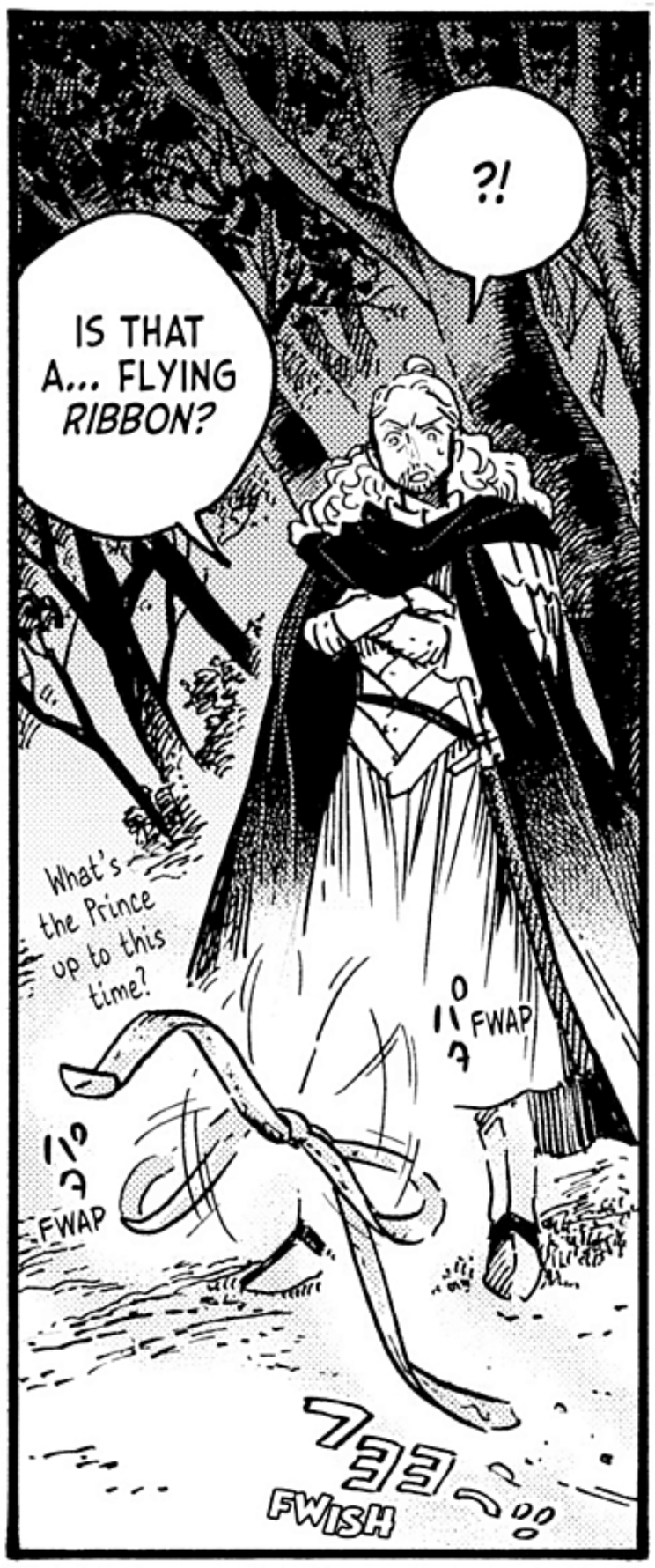


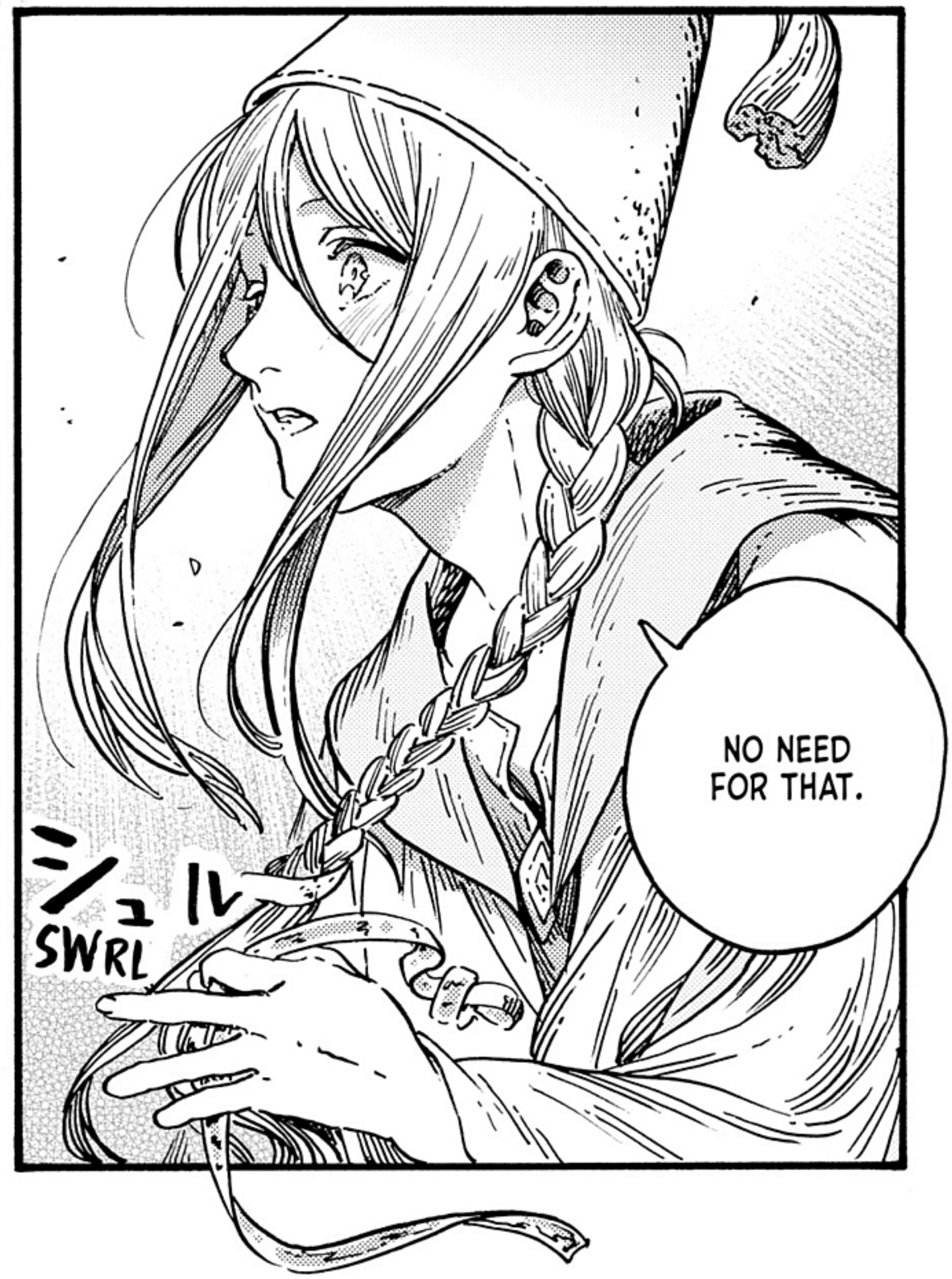


IF YOU'RE CERTAIN YOU'D RATHER NOT ACCOMPANY ME, I WILL NOT INSIST.


WELL... I CAN SEE THE ISSUE IS COMPLI-CATED.
THAT SPELL! IT'S...!


NO.
SHRF
IF I COULD JUST HAVE A SUGGESTION OF WHERE I MIGHT BEGIN—

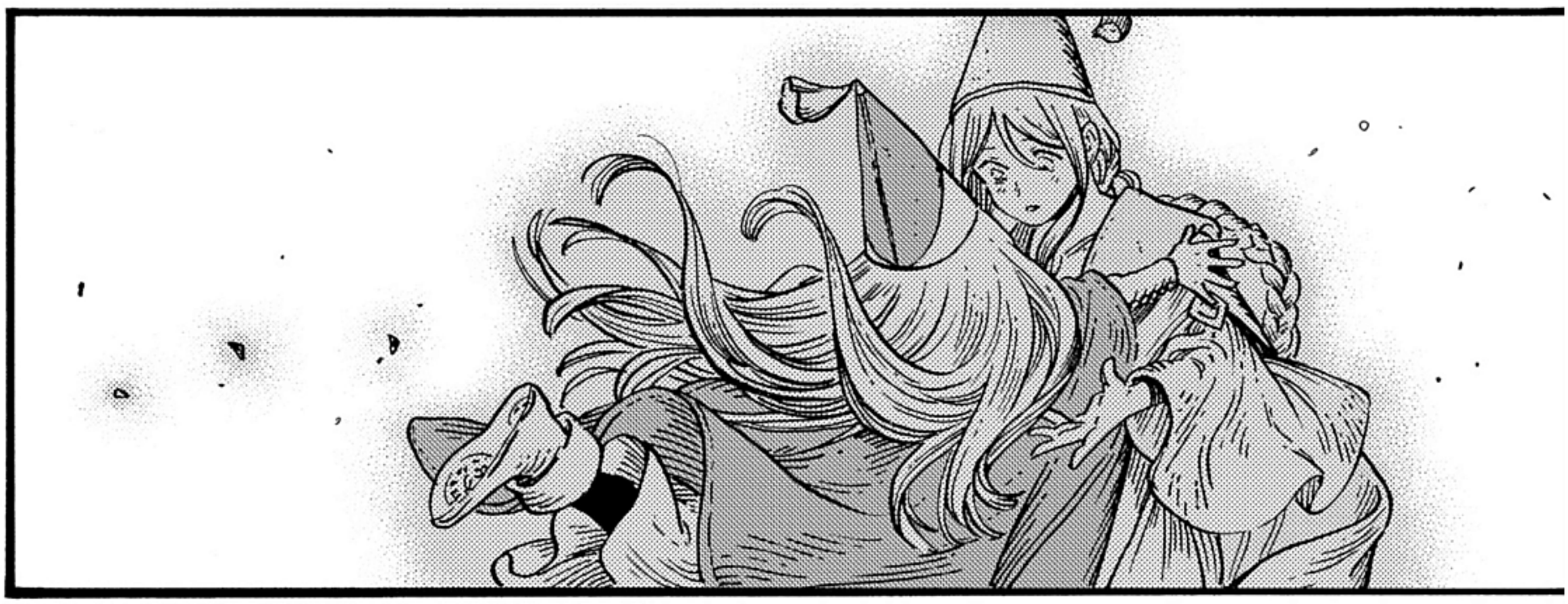

?!
IS THAT A... FLYING *RIBBON?*
What's the Prince up to this time?
FWAP
FWAP
FWISH

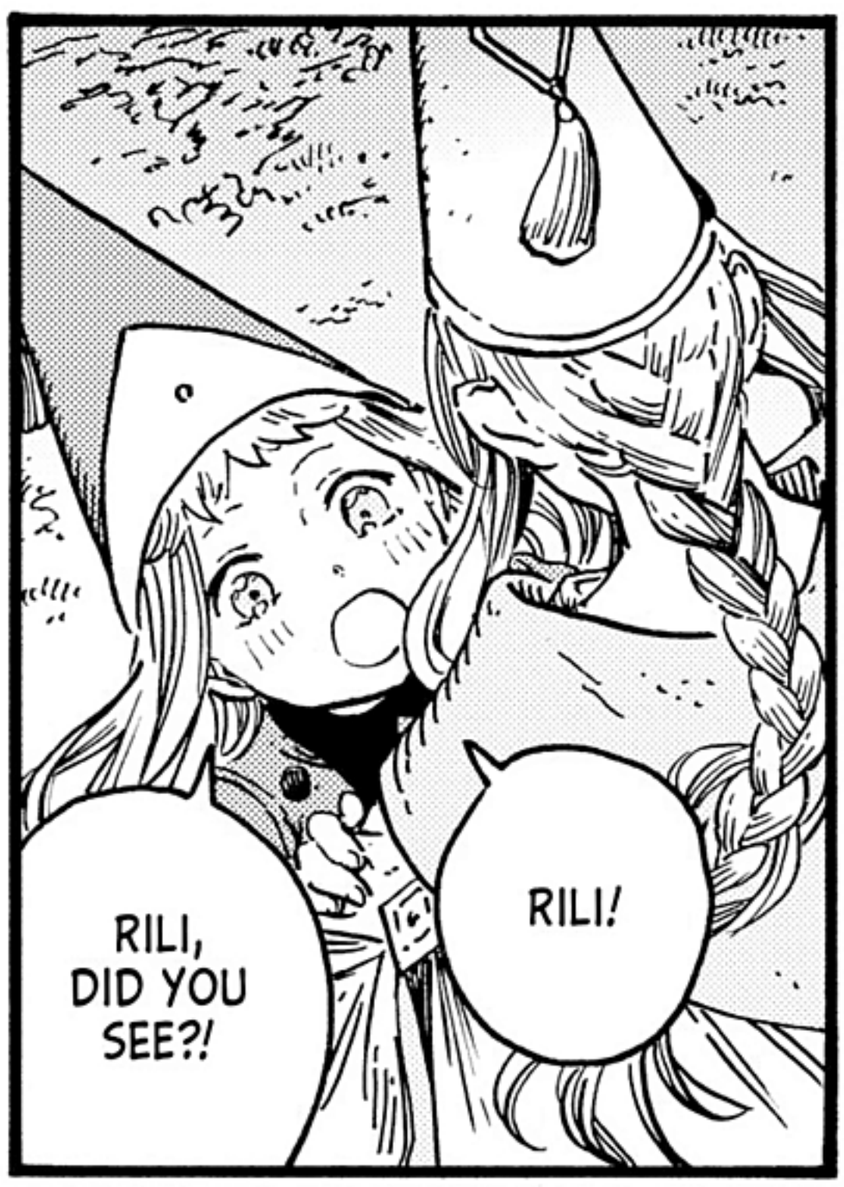

NO NEED FOR THAT.
シュル
SWRL

FOR ALL HER STRENGTH ...
AND YET...
BEFORE I KNEW IT...
...SHE'D DELIVERED US ALL FROM THAT AWFUL MAN'S GRIP.
...THE IMAGE ETCHED INTO MY MEMORY...
...IS OF HER EYES, ROBBED OF THEIR SHIMMER THANKS TO HER BRUSH WITH DESPAIR.
SO HOW...
...COULD I EVER THINK TO SHOW MY FACE AGAIN?
AND IT'S ALL MY FAULT.

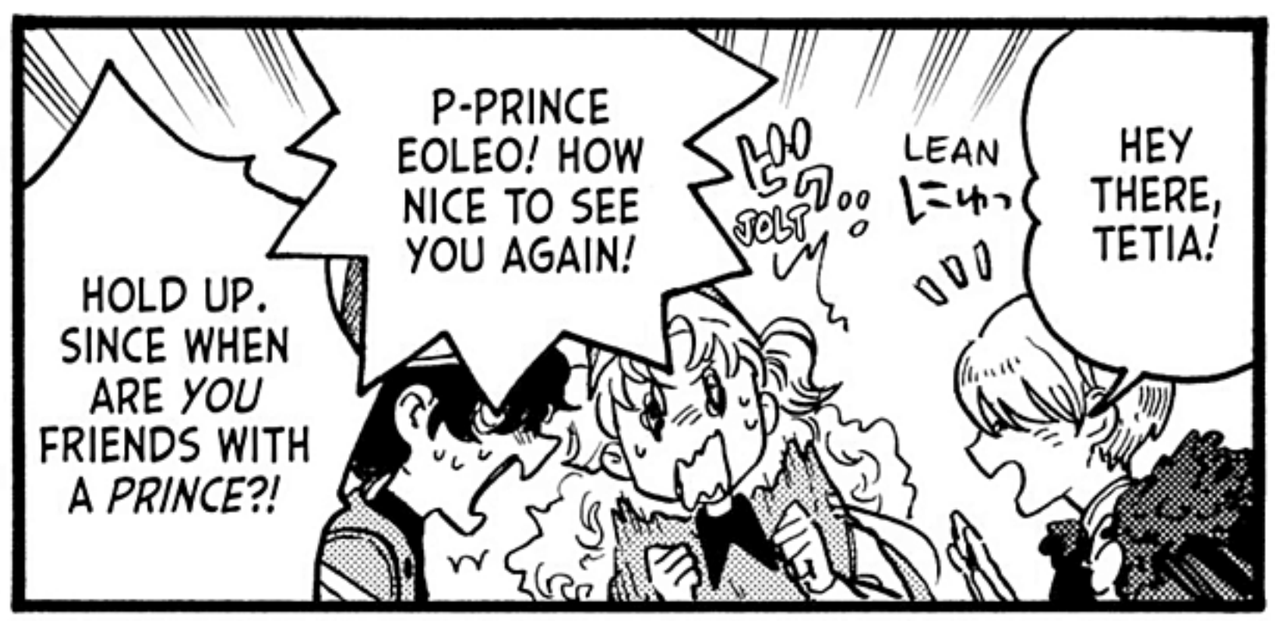
FWUM
MM
SHIII
...?
IINE
WHAT IS THIS LIGHT?
GLINT
Oh, darling!
...I DON'T KNOW HOW I EVER WOULD HAVE FOUND YOU!
THERE YOU ARE! OH, THANK THE STARS! IF IT WEREN'T FOR THIS BANGLE...
!
DADDY, LOOK! IT'S MOMMY!

RILI...!



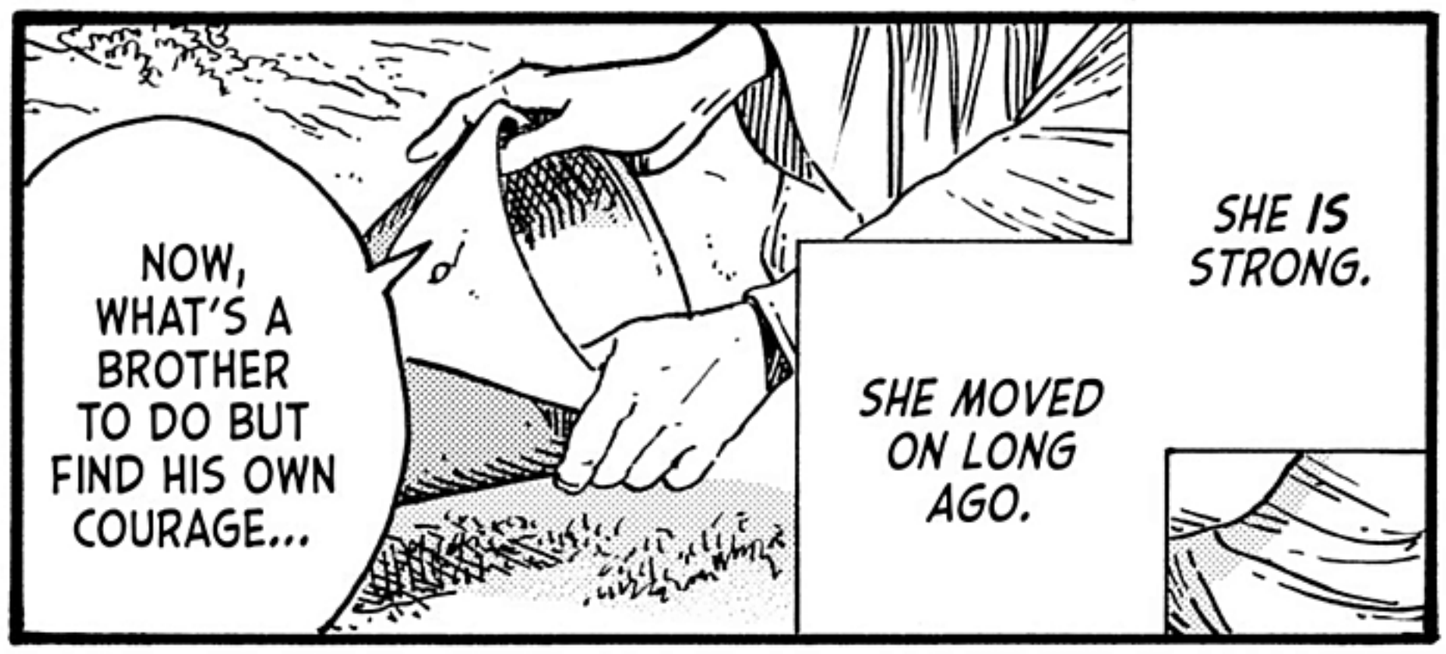

RILI, DID YOU SEE?!
RILI!

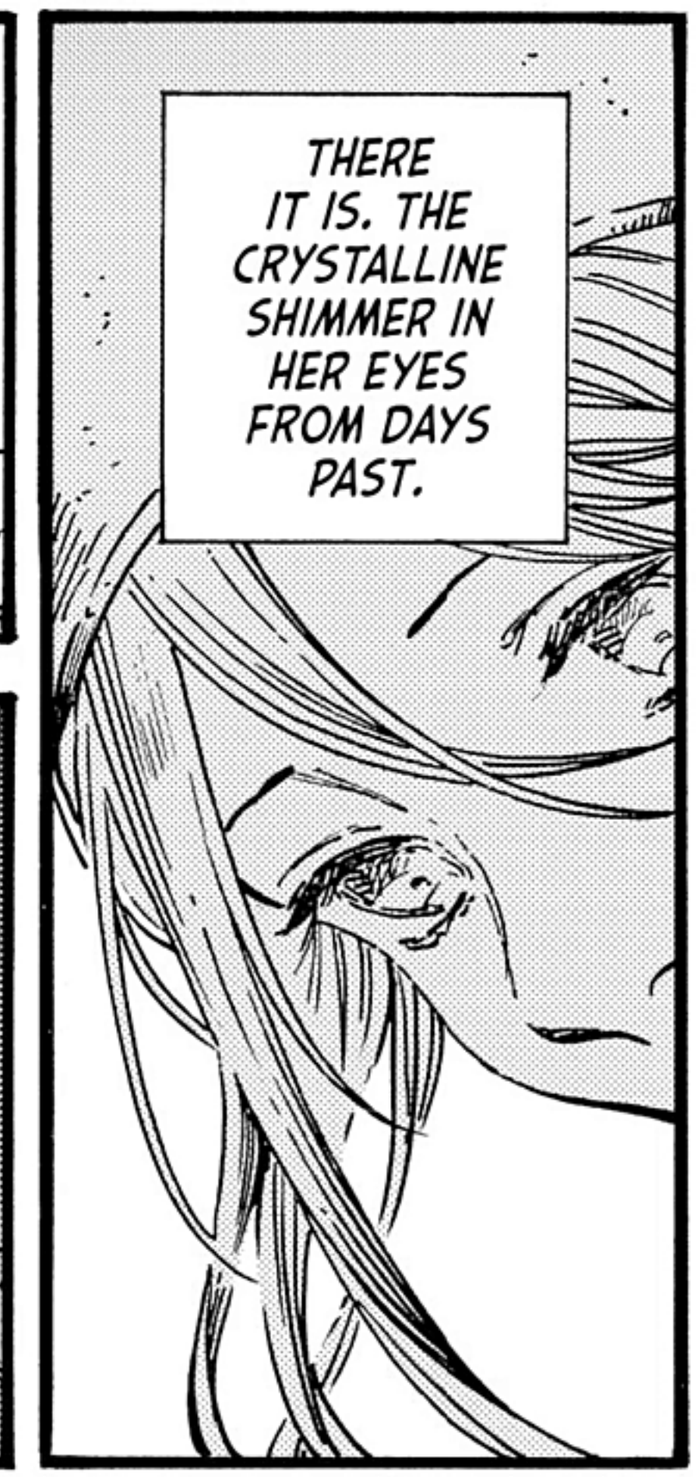
I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW SHE *HAD* A BROTHER.
That's a surprise...
NO WAY!
WH...?! RILI'S THE NAME OF HER BROTHER, RIGHT?!

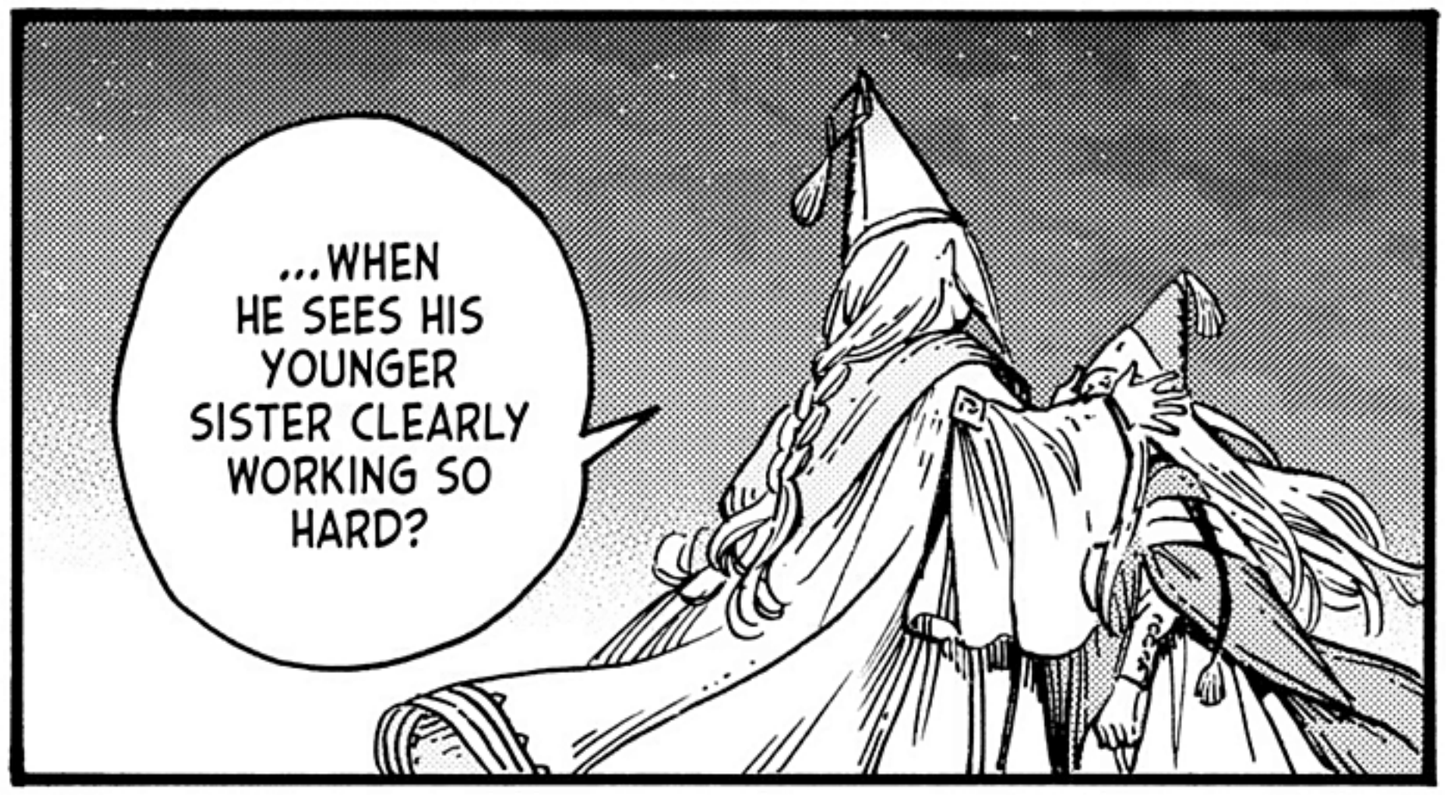

HOLD UP. SINCE WHEN ARE *YOU* FRIENDS WITH A *PRINCE*?!
P-PRINCE EOLEO! HOW NICE TO SEE YOU AGAIN!
JOLT
LEAN
HEY THERE, TETIA!

A SPELL THAT SPARKLES LIKE CRYSTAL...
...AND SHINES LIKE THE STARS.
IT COULDN'T BE ANYONE ELSE'S.
IT'S HER.
A SPELL ONLY SHE COULD DREAM UP...
...BECAUSE IT ENCAPSULATES EVERYTHING SHE IS.

I KNEW THE MOMENT I CAUGHT SIGHT. THERE'S ONLY ONE WITCH WHOSE MAGIC SHINES AND SPARKLES LIKE THAT.
YES.
YES, RICHEH. THAT'S RIGHT.
MY SPELL!
IS THAT HOW YOU FOUND ME?!
R...
RILI...!
HOW IS IT THAT MY DEAR SISTER'S BRILLIANCE...
...MANAGES TO KEEP ME GOING TIME AND TIME AGAIN?

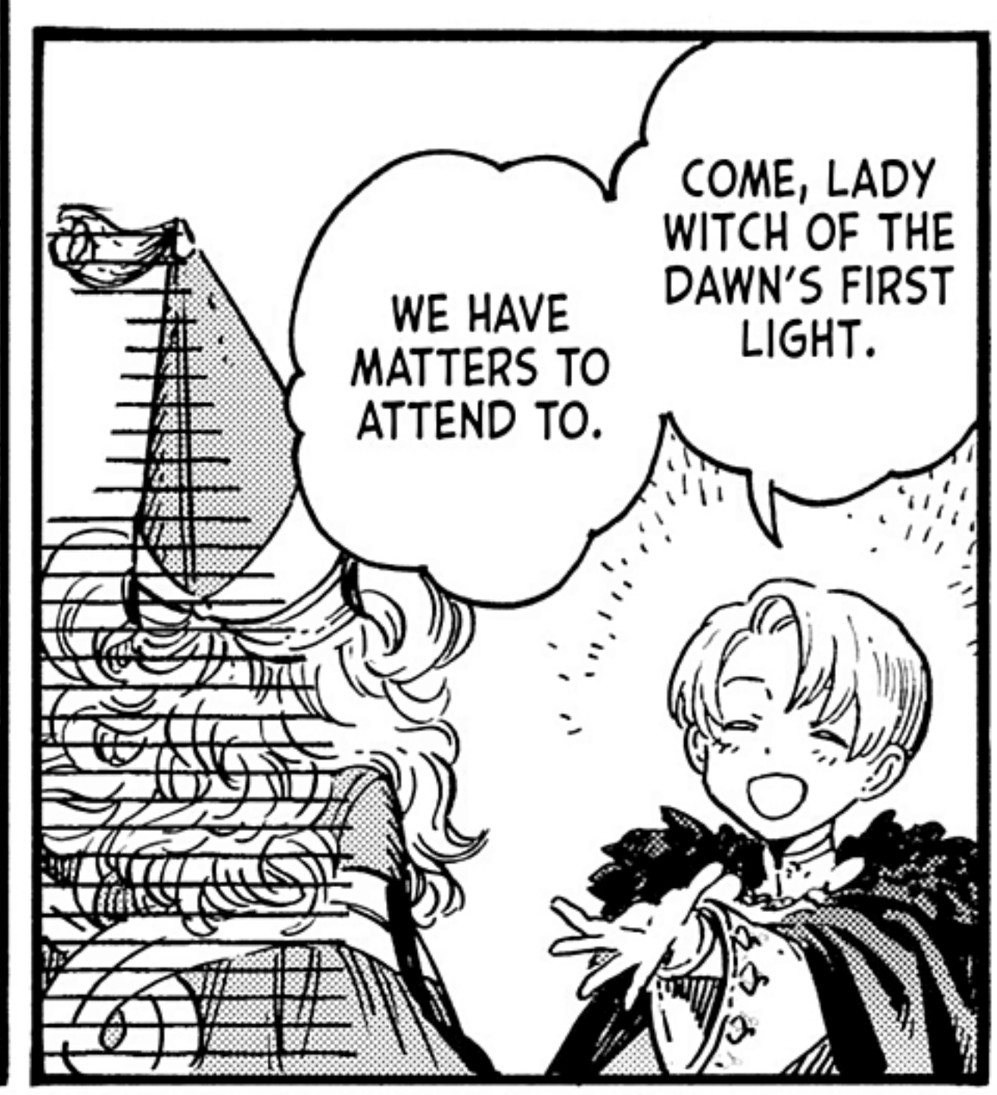

NOW, WHAT'S A BROTHER TO DO BUT FIND HIS OWN COURAGE...
SHE MOVED ON LONG AGO.
SHE IS STRONG.


THERE IT IS. THE CRYSTALLINE SHIMMER IN HER EYES FROM DAYS PAST.


...WHEN HE SEES HIS YOUNGER SISTER CLEARLY WORKING SO HARD?

UM...
I... WE DO...?

YES! OF COURSE!
!
PRINCE EOLEO. SHALL WE?

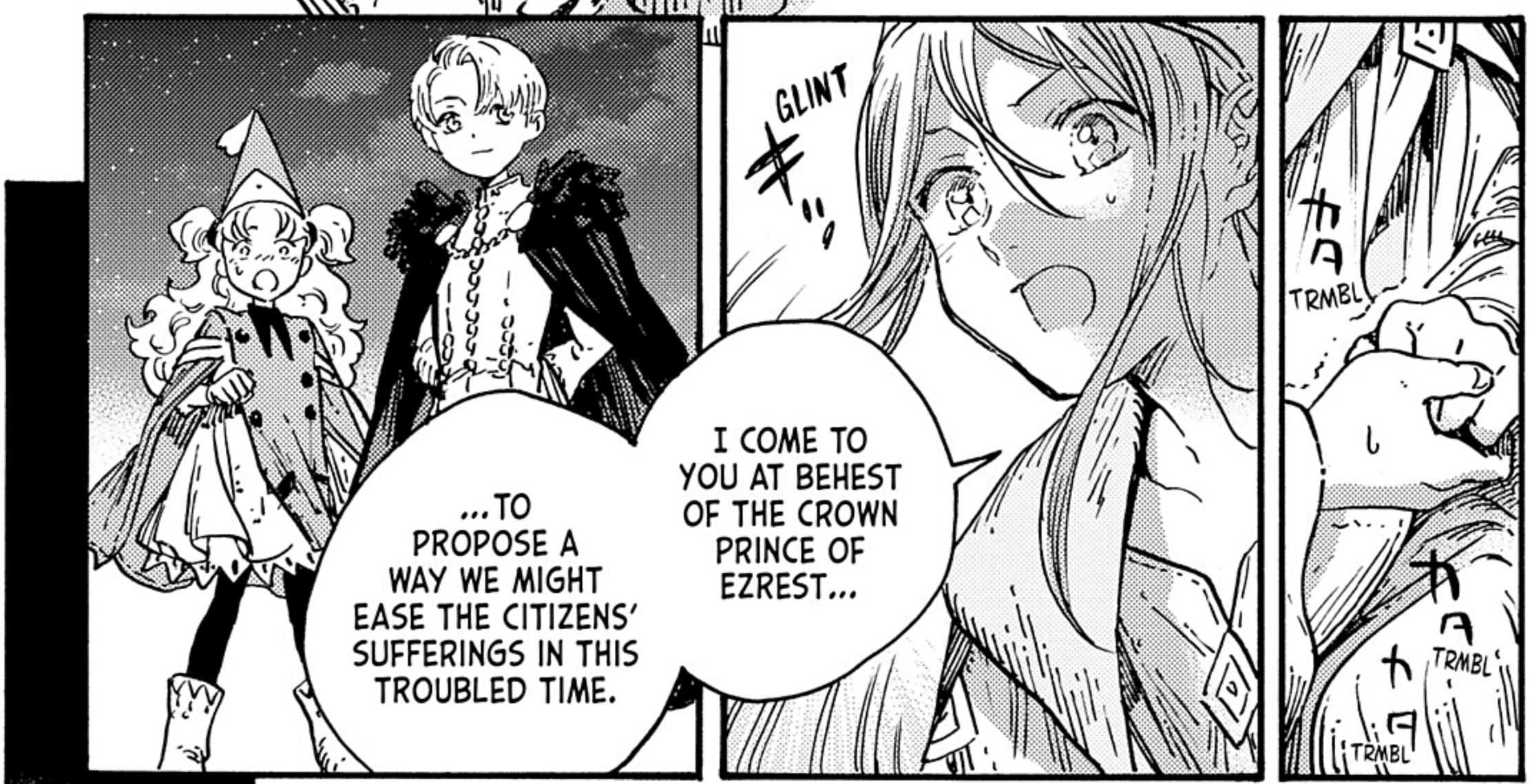

WE HAVE MATTERS TO ATTEND TO.
COME, LADY WITCH OF THE DAWN'S FIRST LIGHT.

BEFORE YOU KNEELS RILIPHIN, APPRENTICE TO BELDARUIT, THE WITCHES' WISE IN TEACHINGS.

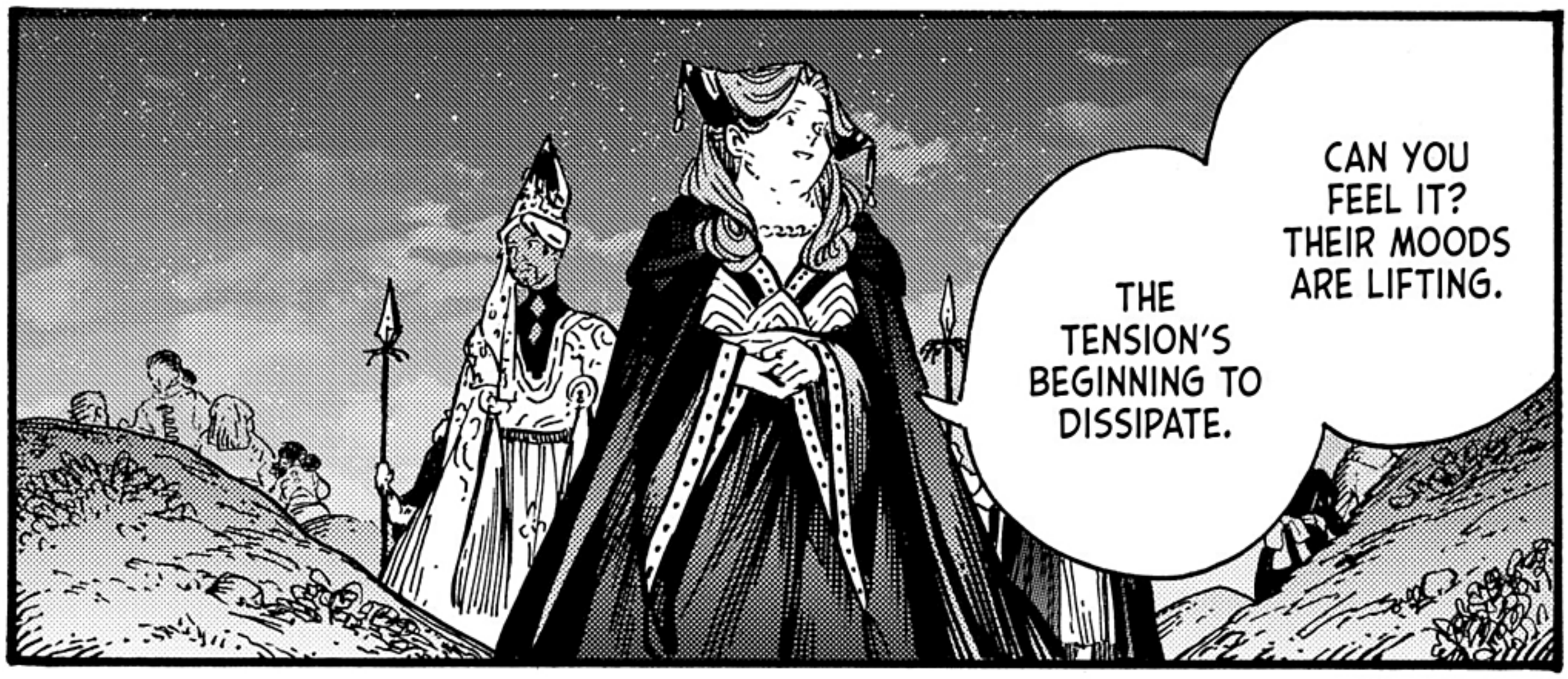
SHF

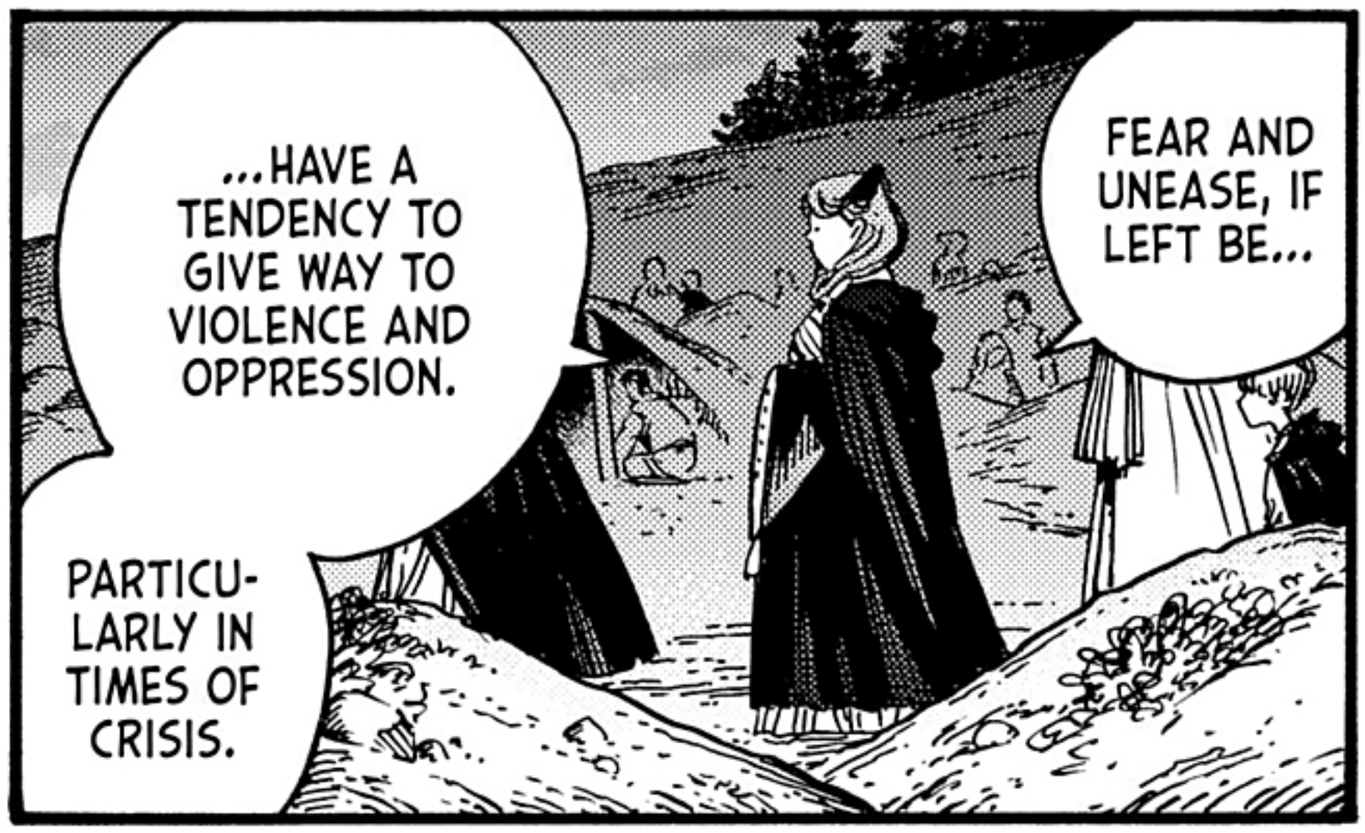
YOUR MAJESTY ZAYAMAIYA ...

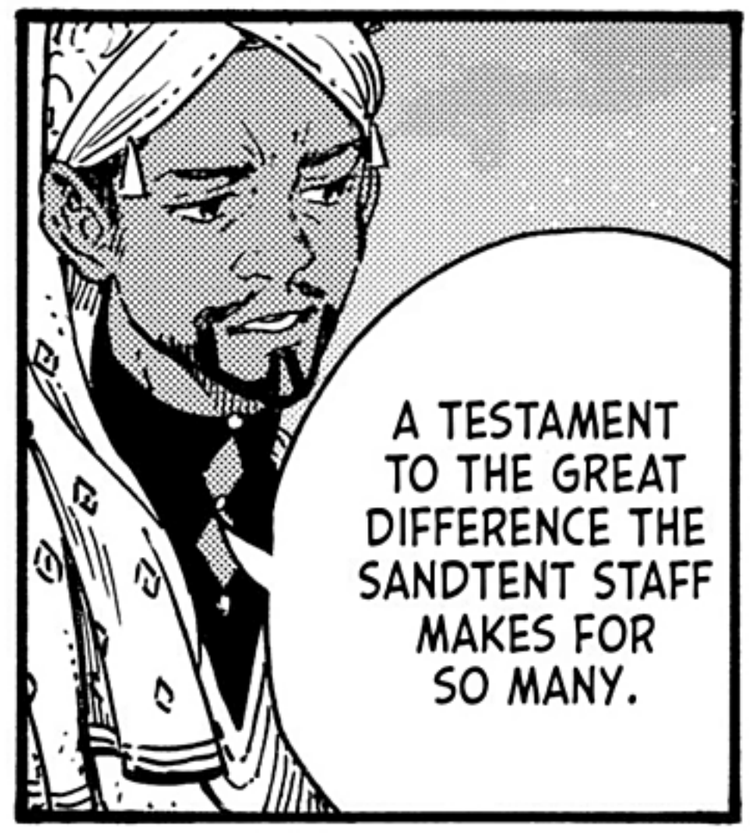
...O RULERS OF THE FIVE, AND LAGRAH THE WISE.

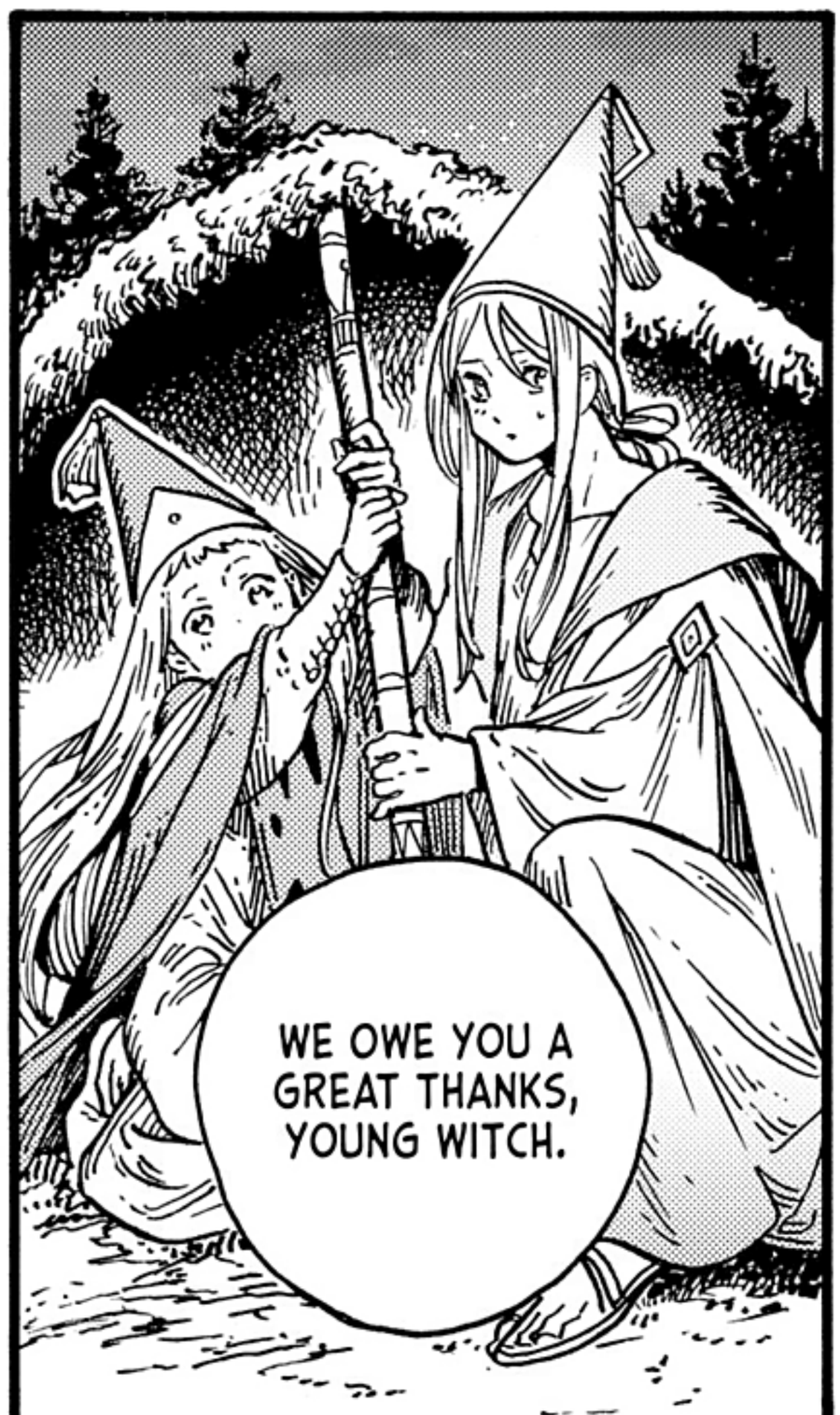


ZRSH
ZRSH
ZRSH
OH, THANK GOODNESS.
SHE'S STOPPED CRYING AT LAST.
HOORAY!
YAY!
WHOO!
AHHH... THIS IS SO MUCH NICER.
I got this, dear!
I DIDN'T KNOW HOW I WAS GOING TO NURSE HER IN SUCH A CROWD...
WHAT A DIFFERENCE ONE THIN LAYER MAKES...
Thank you, honey, for standing watch.

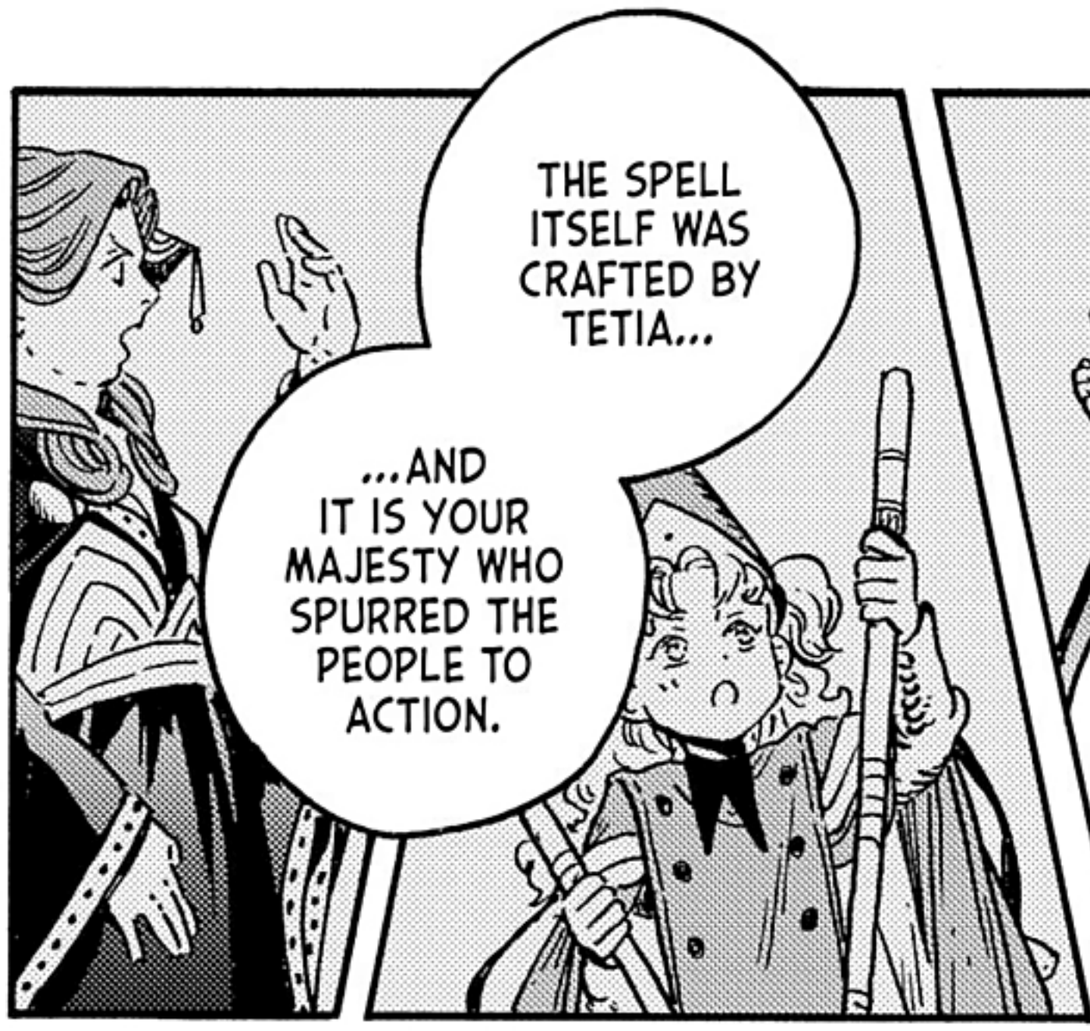

CAN YOU FEEL IT? THEIR MOODS ARE LIFTING.
THE TENSION'S BEGINNING TO DISSIPATE.


...HAVE A TENDENCY TO GIVE WAY TO VIOLENCE AND OPPRESSION.
FEAR AND UNEASE, IF LEFT BE...
PARTICU-LARLY IN TIMES OF CRISIS.

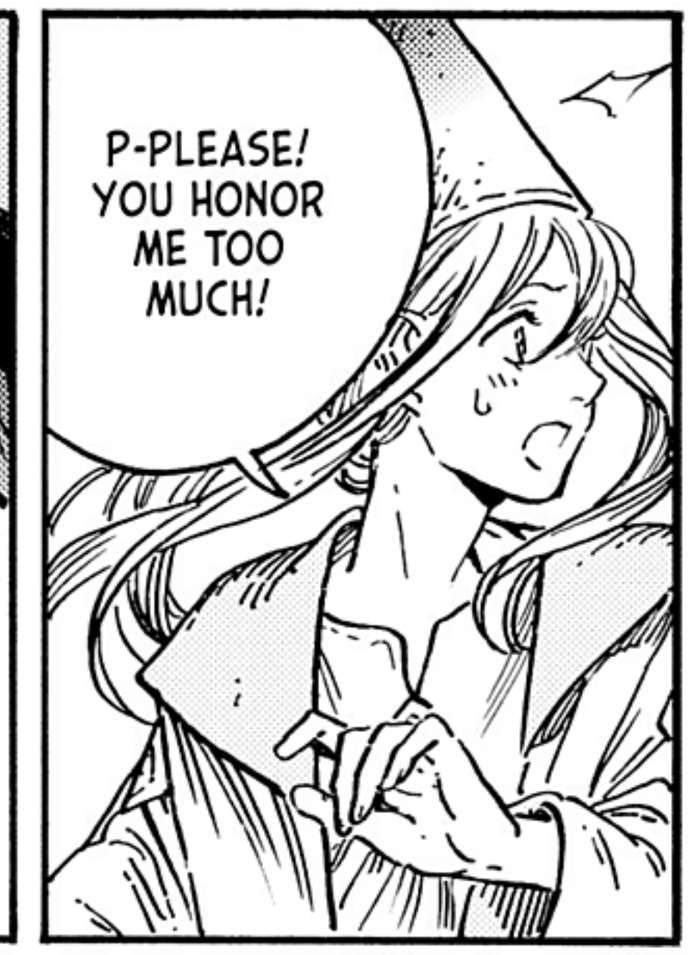

A TESTAMENT TO THE GREAT DIFFERENCE THE SANDTENT STAFF MAKES FOR SO MANY.

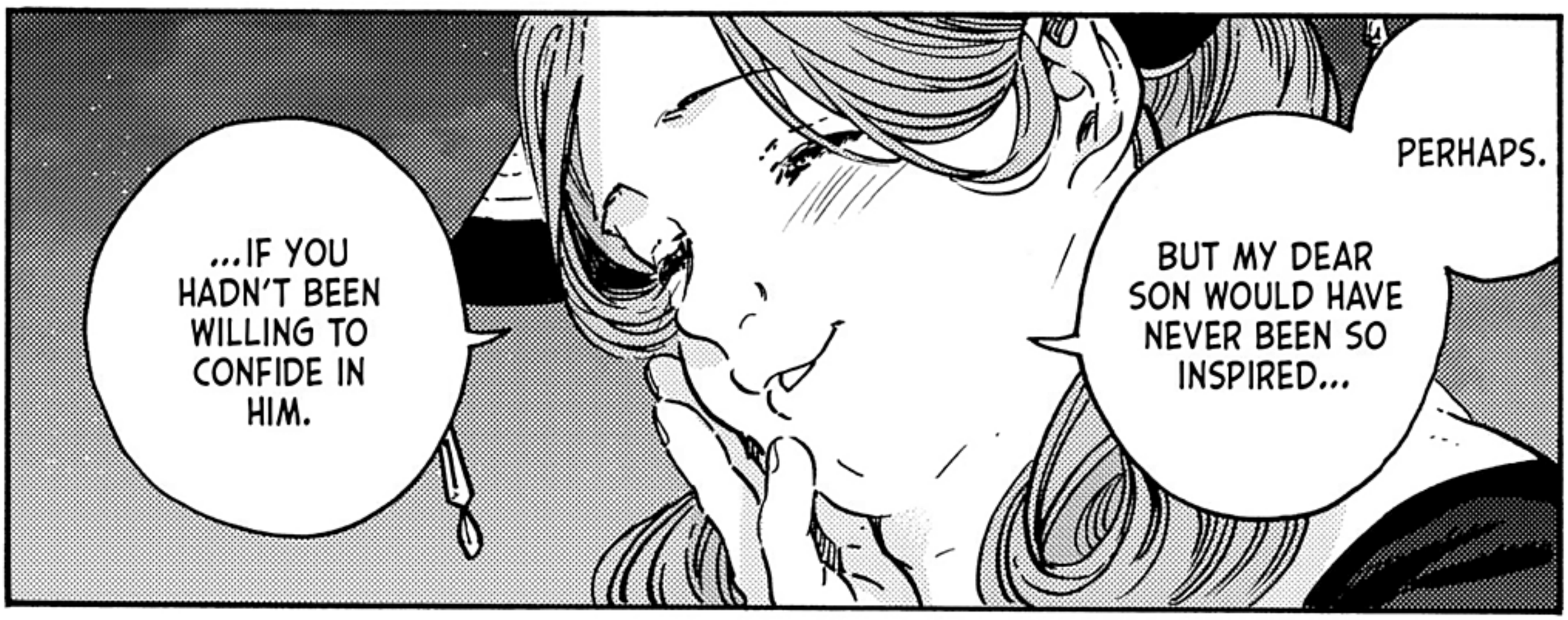

WE OWE YOU A GREAT THANKS, YOUNG WITCH.

YOUR SWIFT WORK KEPT THAT DANGER AT BAY. I'M AWED BY HOW QUICKLY YOU FASHIONED YOUR CONTRAPTIONS...
...AND PROVIDED US WITH THIS BARE MINIMUM OF PRIVACY.

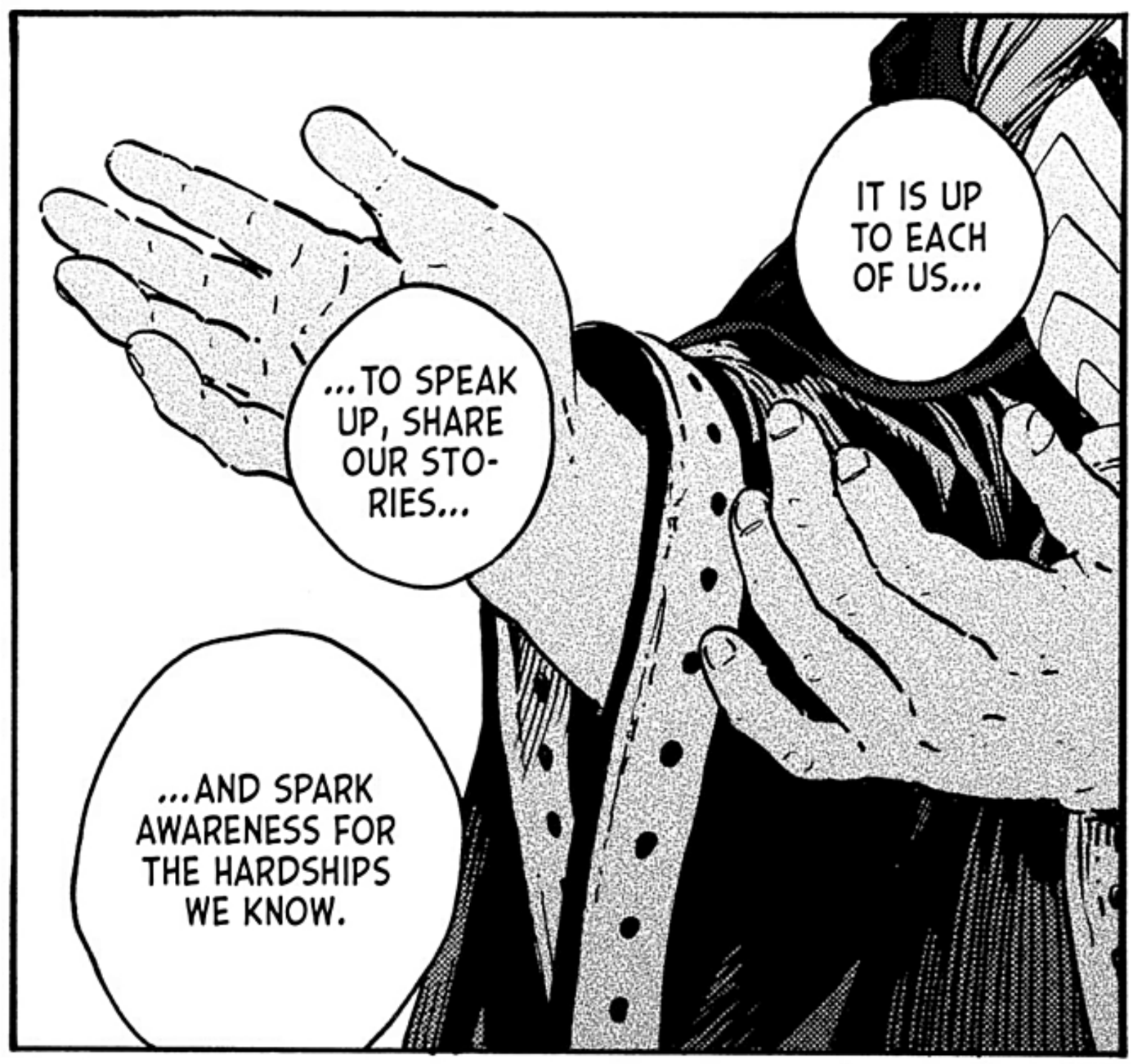

THE SPELL ITSELF WAS CRAFTED BY TETIA...
...AND IT IS YOUR MAJESTY WHO SPURRED THE PEOPLE TO ACTION.

THIS WAS PRINCE EOLEO'S IDEA.


P-PLEASE! YOU HONOR ME TOO MUCH!


...IF YOU HADN'T BEEN WILLING TO CONFIDE IN HIM.
PERHAPS.
BUT MY DEAR SON WOULD HAVE NEVER BEEN SO INSPIRED...

TO MY MIND, IT IS THOSE ACTIONS...


IT IS UP TO EACH OF US...
...TO SPEAK UP, SHARE OUR STO-RIES...
...AND SPARK AWARENESS FOR THE HARDSHIPS WE KNOW.

...BEFORE ALL OTHERS...

...THAT DESERVE PRAISE AND RECOGNITION.

GWIP

YOU GOT THAT RIGHT.

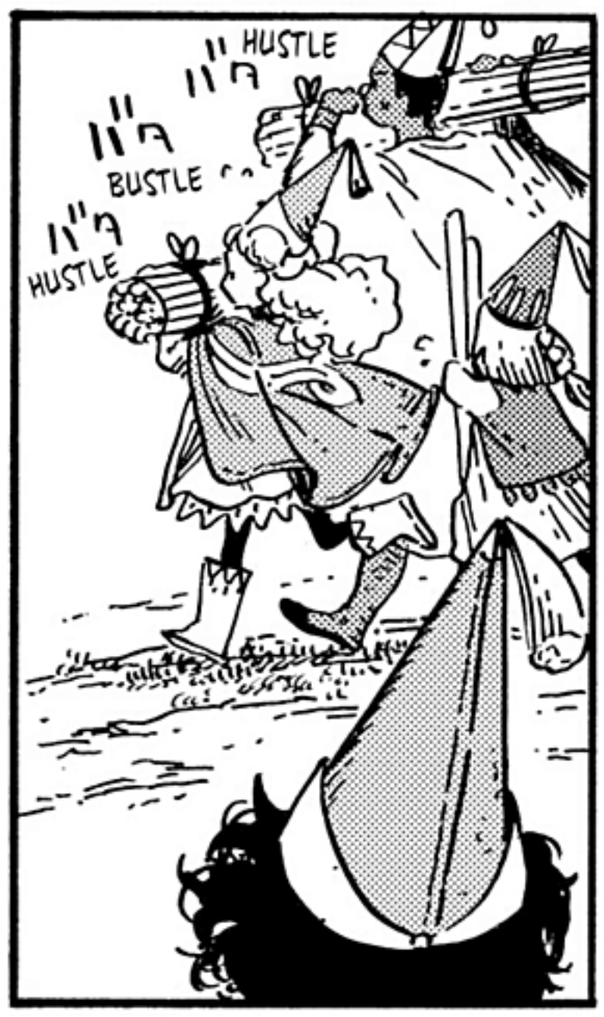
RILI'S AMAZING.

I'VE GOT THE BEST BIG BROTHER.

GRIN

THANK YOU.

TRULY.


HUSTLE
BUSTLE
HUSTLE

I'M OUT OF STAVES!
MY SPELL'S A HIT! I'M AT THE CENTER OF A SERIOUS SAND-SATION!
I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS IS HAPPENING! AM I DREAMING?!
FIVE MORE READY TO GO OVER HERE!

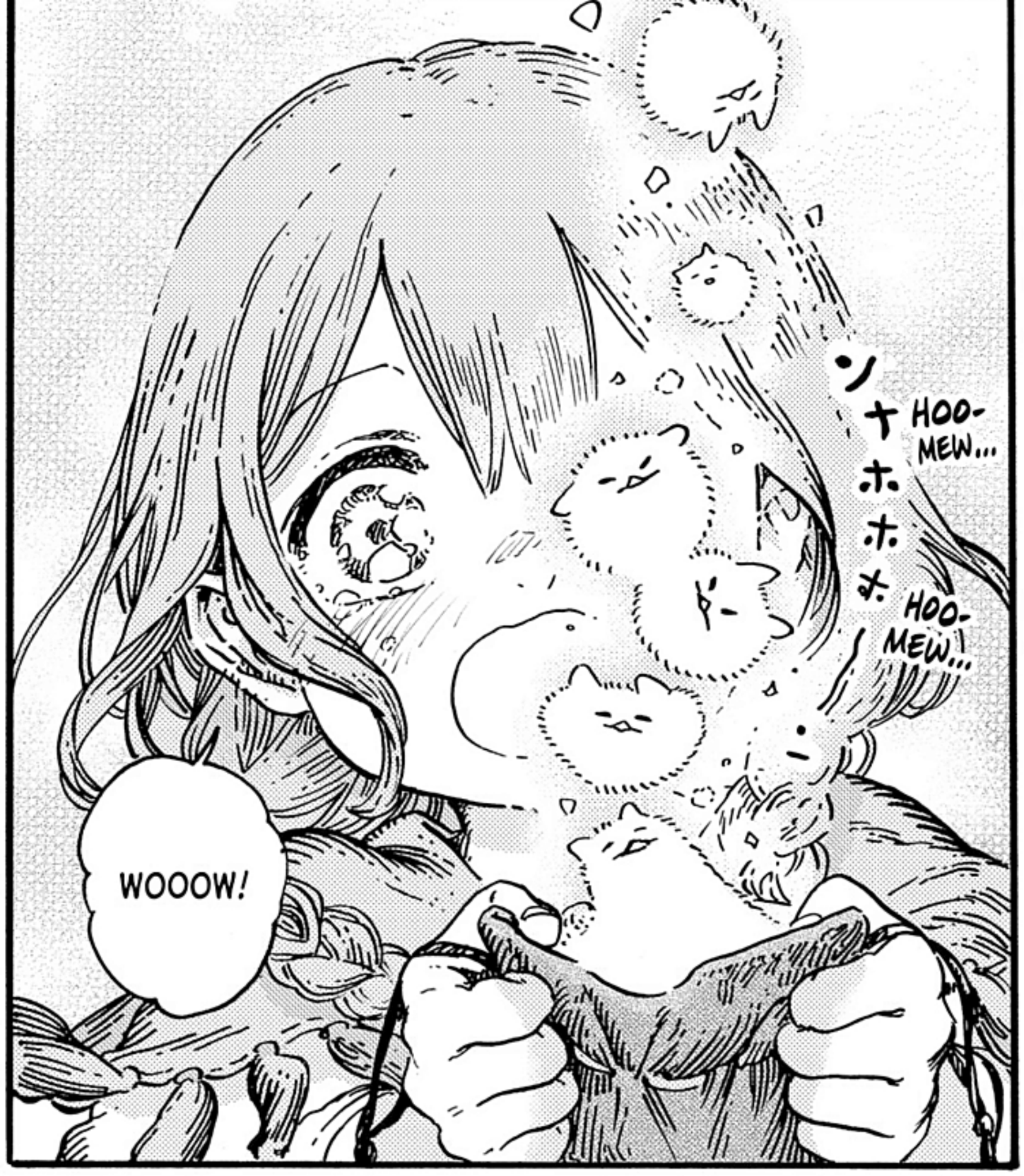
MEANWHILE, MY MAGIC HAS NO PLACE TO SHINE TONIGHT.
UNLESS...

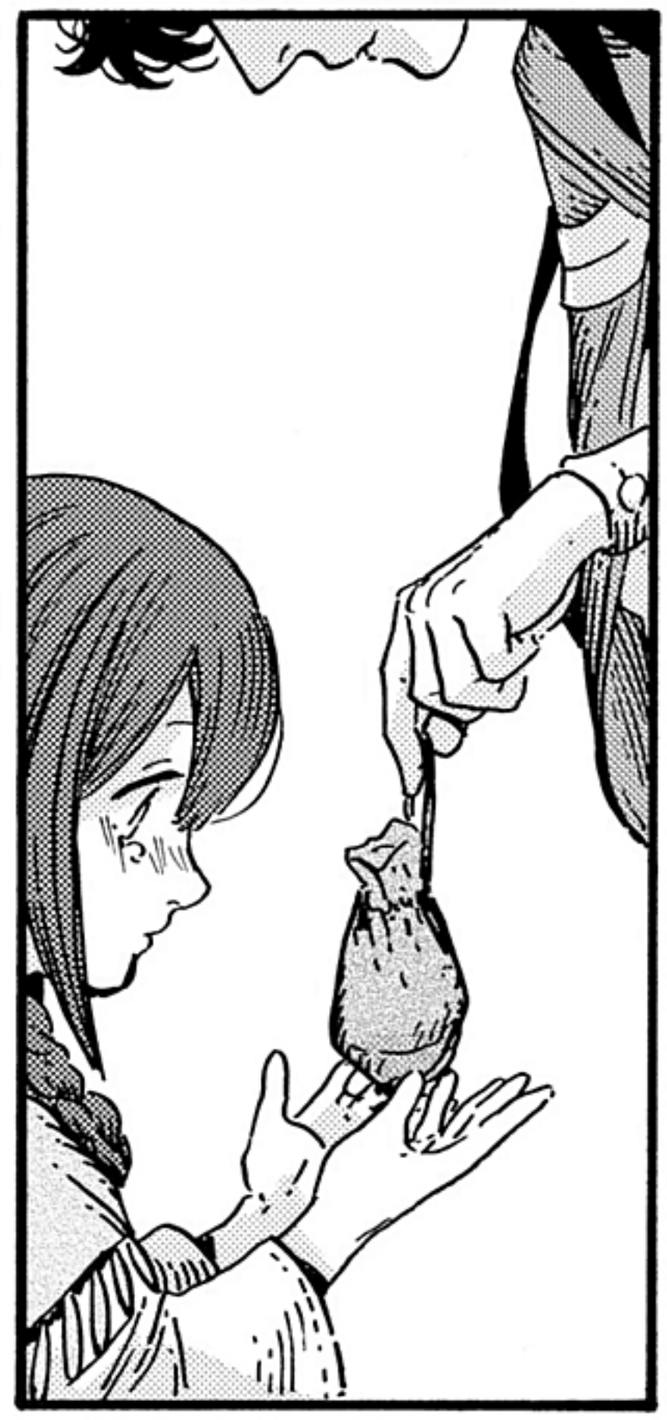
IMAGINE THAT. NEITHER RICHEH NOR TETIA DEBUTED IN THE PROCESSION...
...BUT IT WAS THEIR SPELLS THAT TURNED OUT TO BE THE STARS OF THE EVENING.

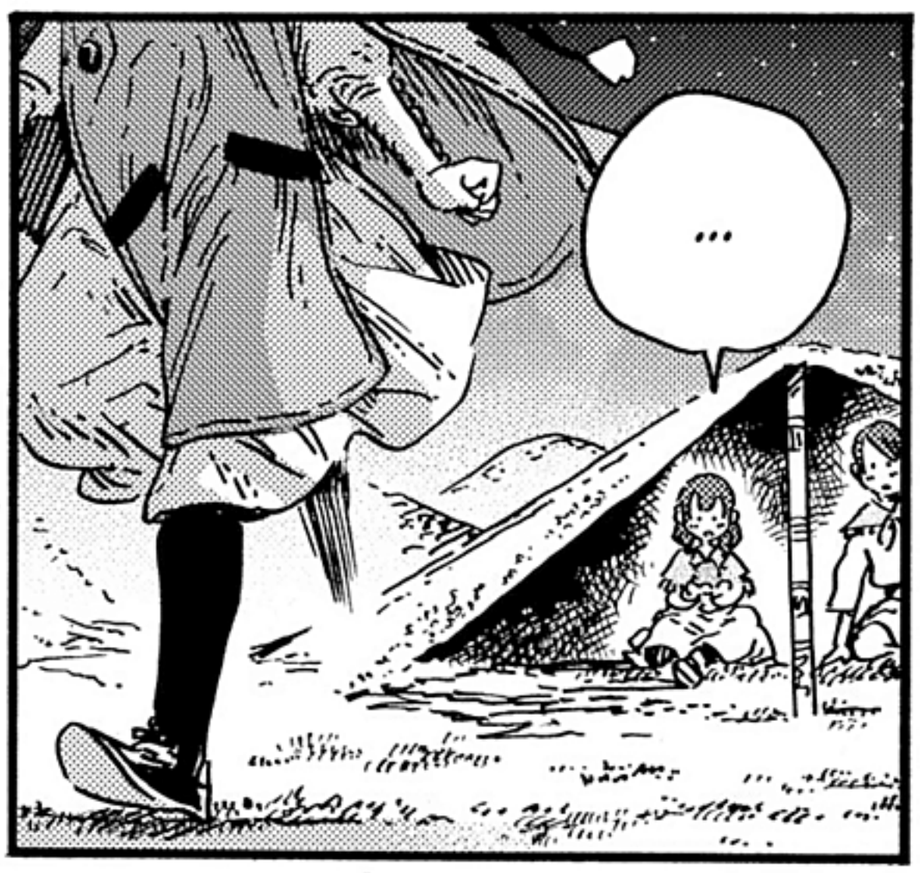
COULD YOU PUT OUT YOUR HAND?

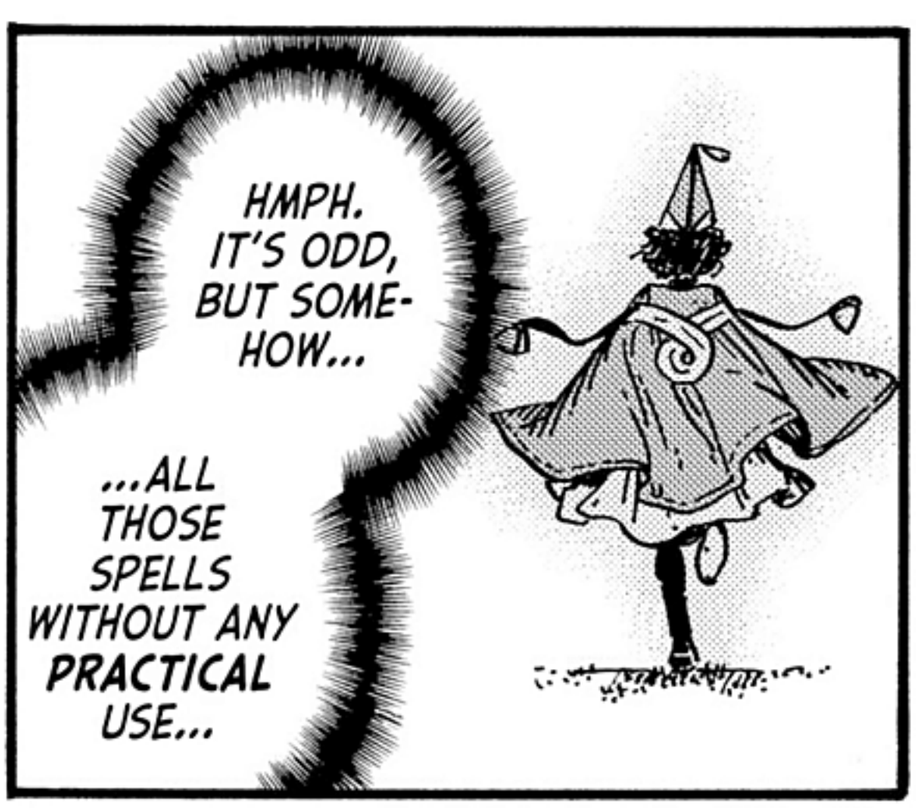
HEY, THERE.

SNFF
SNFF


WOOOW!
HOO-MEW...
HOO-MEW!

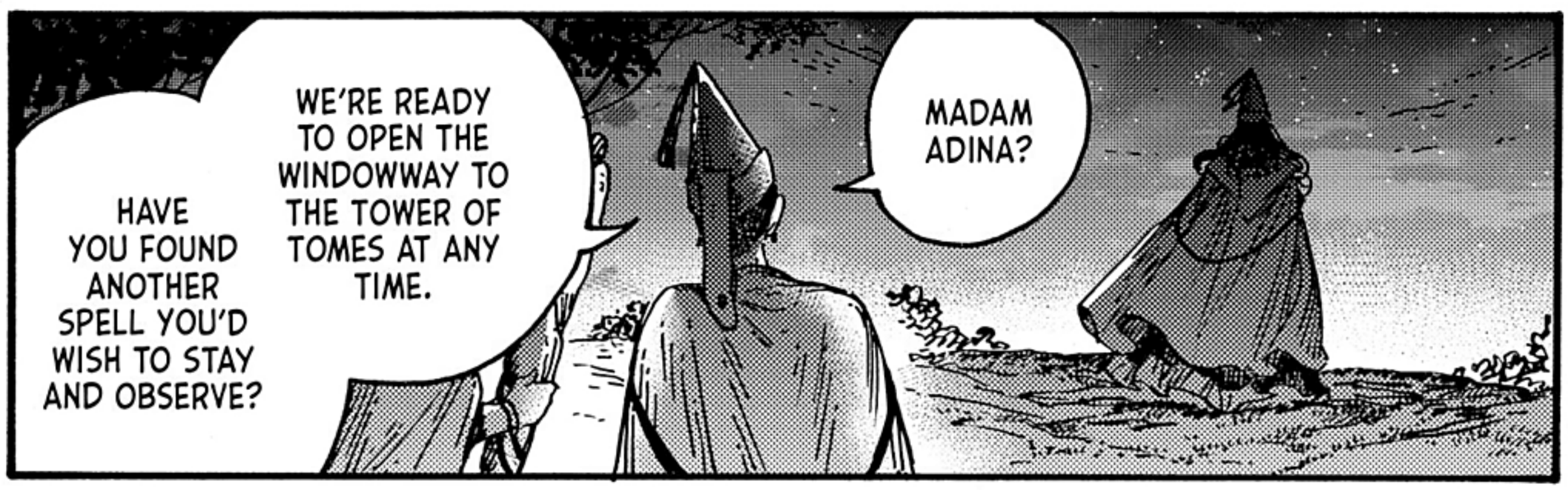



...


HMPH. IT'S ODD, BUT SOME-HOW...
...ALL THOSE SPELLS WITHOUT ANY PRACTICAL USE...

LIKE IT? IT'S YOURS.
IT'LL ONLY GLOW FOR ONE NIGHT...
...BUT IT CAN KEEP YOU COMPANY UNTIL ALL THIS IS OVER.

...DON'T SEEM SO POINTLESS AFTER ALL.



CHAPTER 70 ♦ END

Witch Hat Atelier

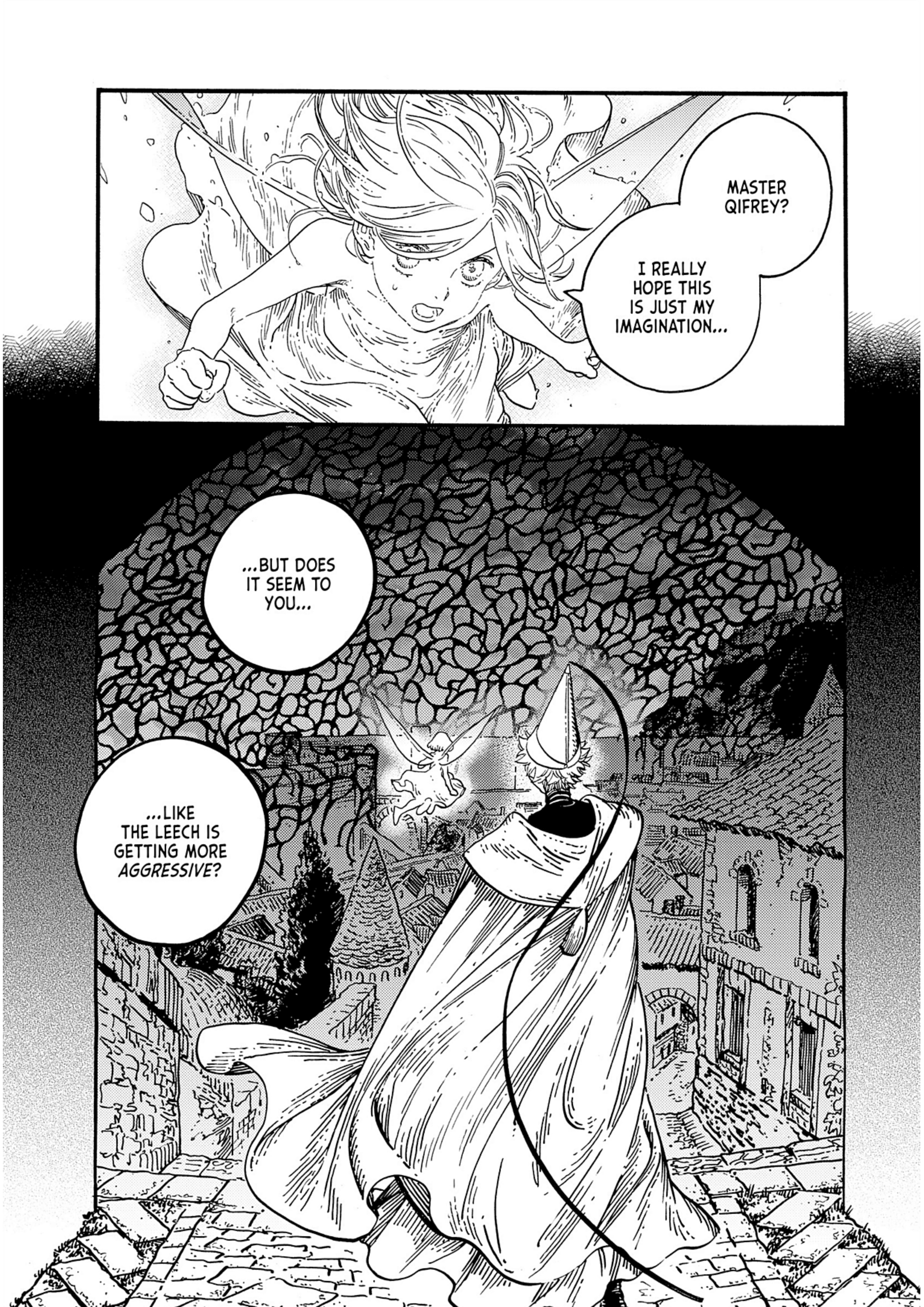
SHLRP

SHLRP

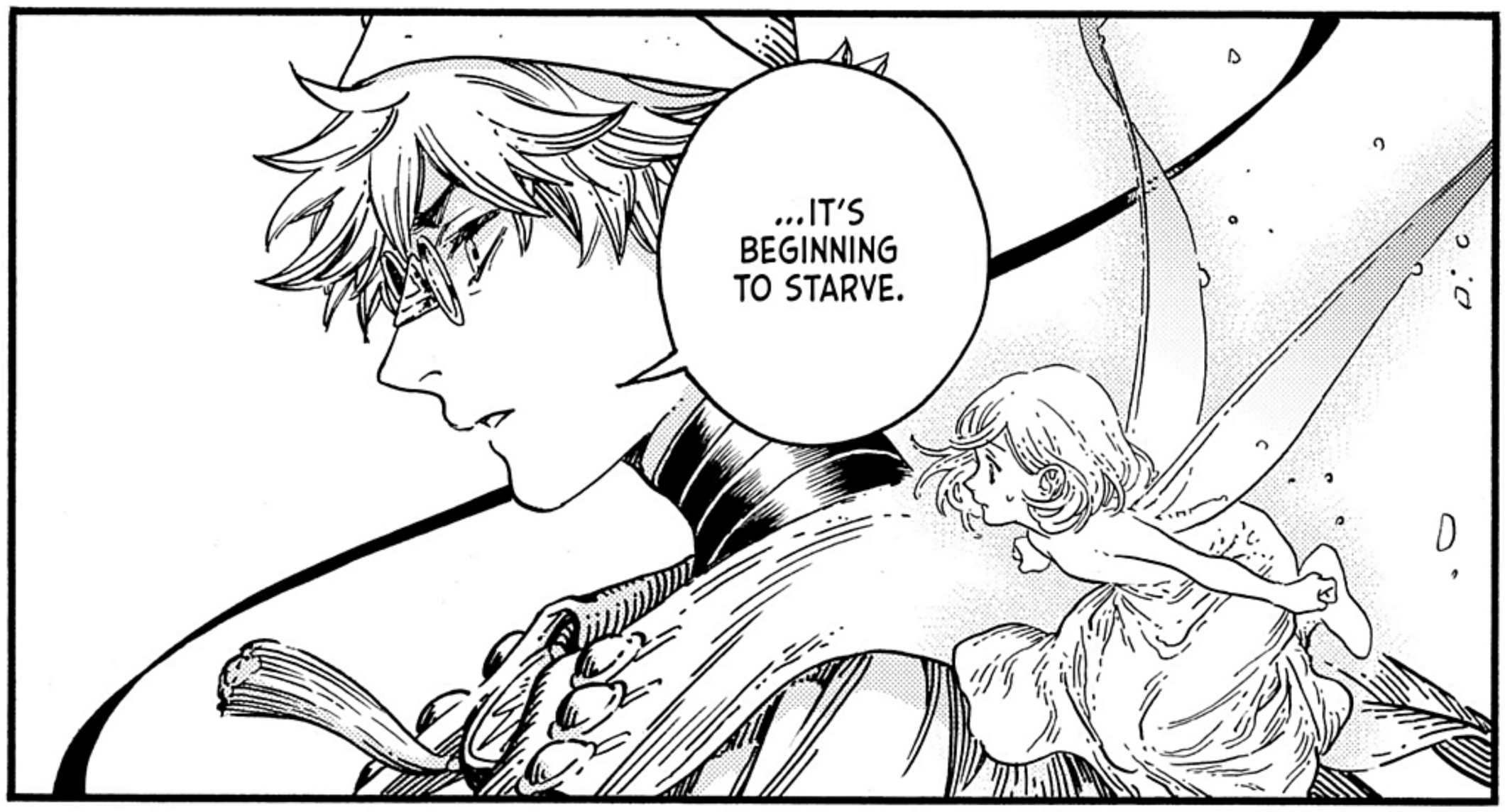
SHLRP

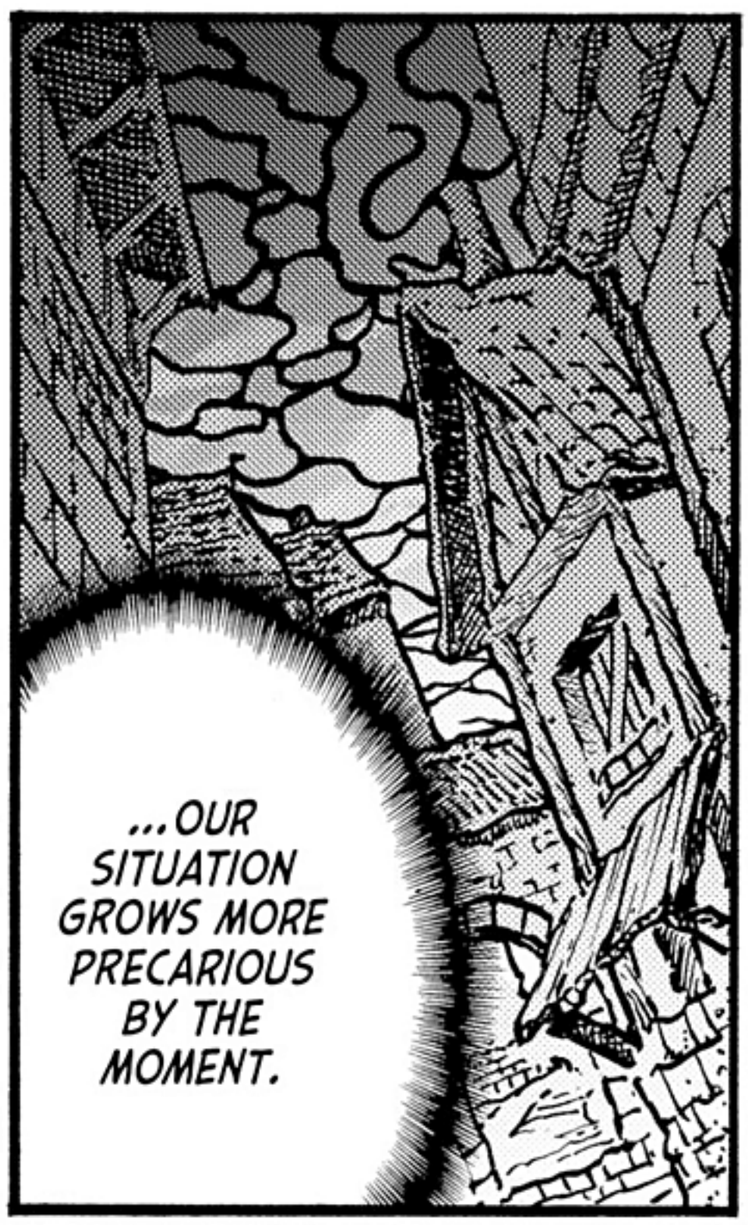
OH, NO! THAT PEGASUS ...!

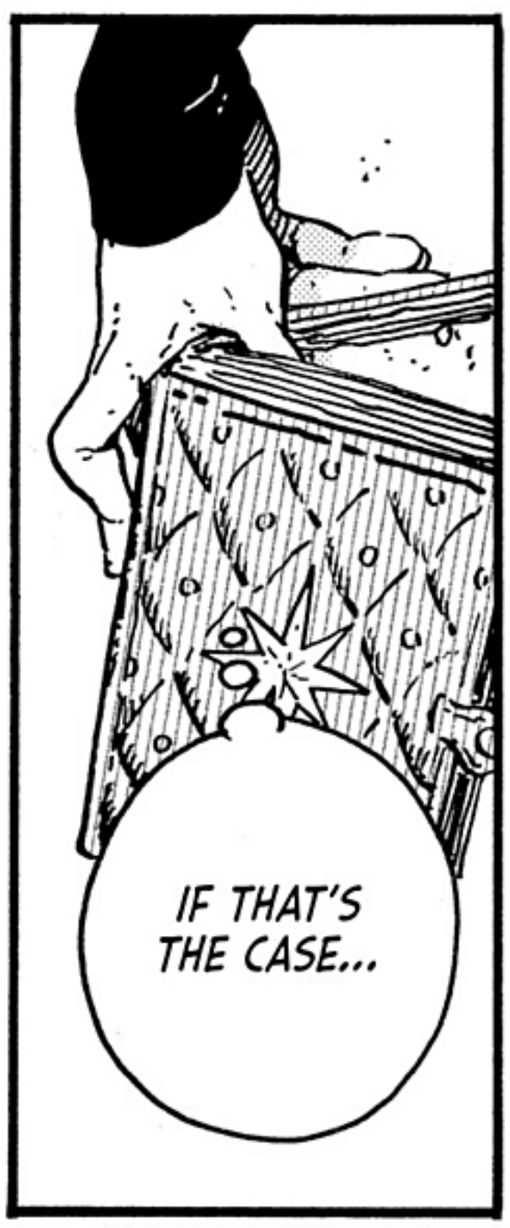
ZRSHRK
SPLRK
A PITY. THERE WAS SCARCE ENOUGH TIME TO EVACUATE THE PEOPLE...
...WHICH MEANS THE ANIMALS IN THE CITY HAVE BEEN LEFT TO FEND FOR THEMSELVES.


MASTER QIFREY?
I REALLY HOPE THIS IS JUST MY IMAGINATION...
...BUT DOES IT SEEM TO YOU...
...LIKE THE LEECH IS GETTING MORE *AGGRESSIVE*?

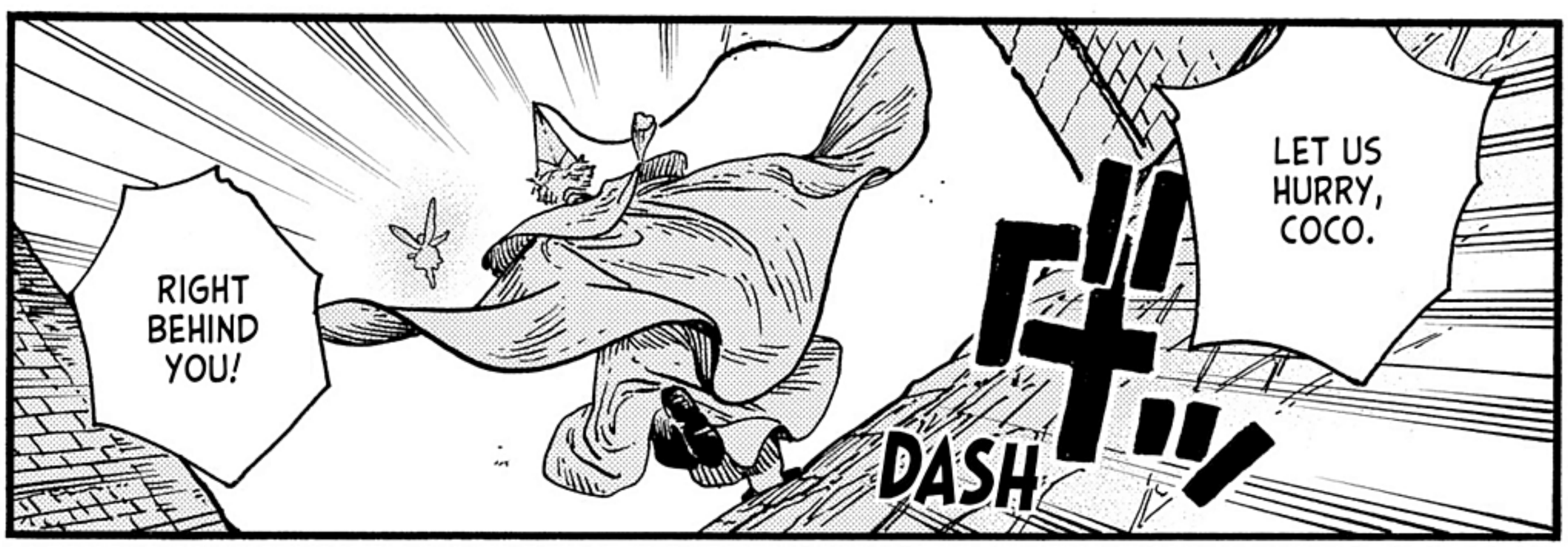
Chapter 71


...IT'S BEGINNING TO STARVE.


...OUR SITUATION GROWS MORE PRECARIOUS BY THE MOMENT.


IF THAT'S THE CASE...

MOST CITIZENS ARE SAFELY OUT OF THE CITY.
AND WITH THEM WENT THE LEECH'S MOST ABUNDANT SOURCE OF FOOD.


RIGHT BEHIND YOU!
DASH
LET US HURRY, COCO.

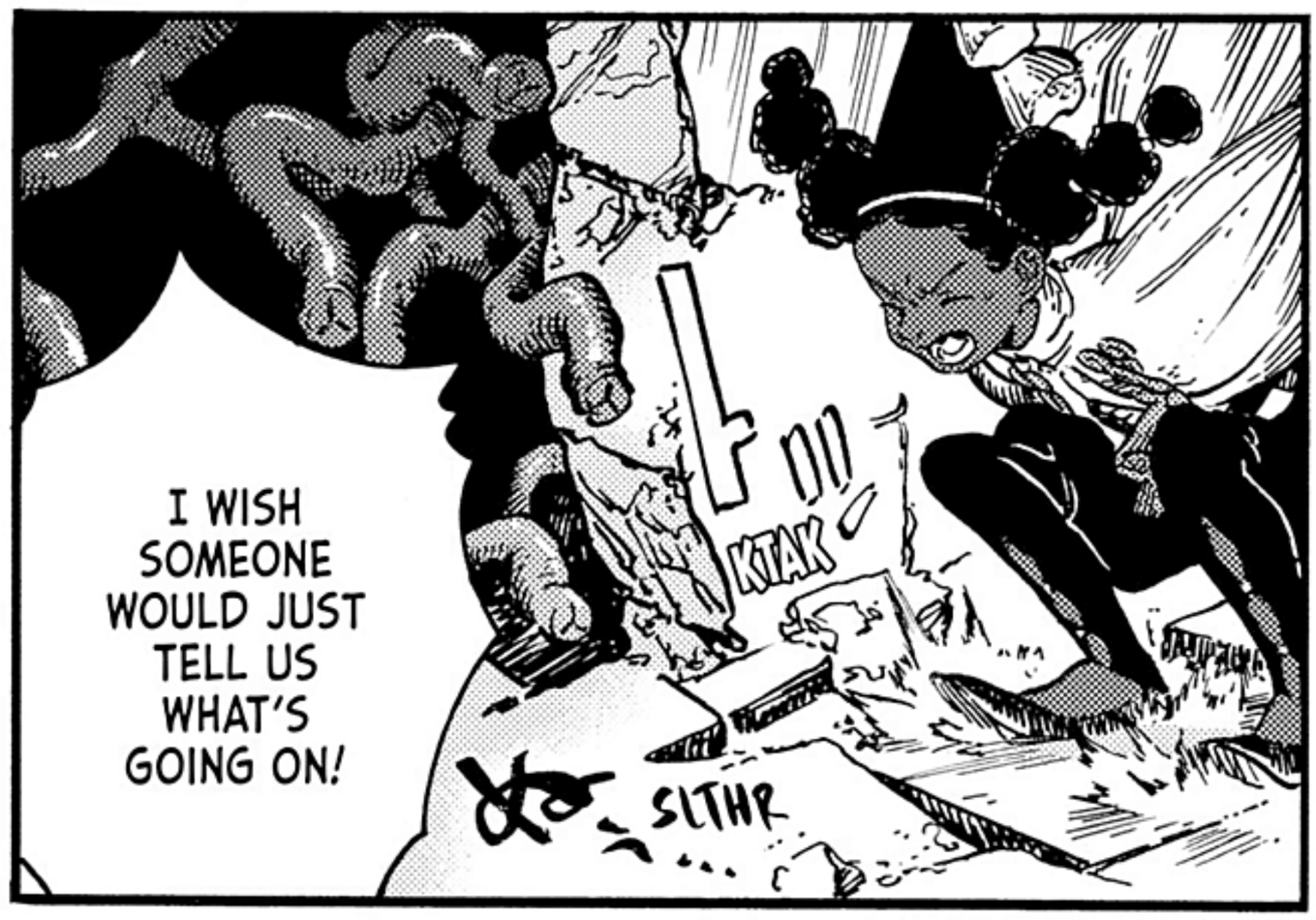
'CAUSE IT'S SLIMY, AND WRIGGLY, AND TOTALLY *EW!*

MASTER? TALK TO ME!

WORST OF ALL, IT KEEPS GETTING *BIGGER!*

WHAT IS THIS THING, AND HOW DO WE STOP IT?!

APOLOGIES, JUJY! I HAVE NO ANSWERS FOR YOU THIS TIME!



MASTER! NO!

!!

GWP

...

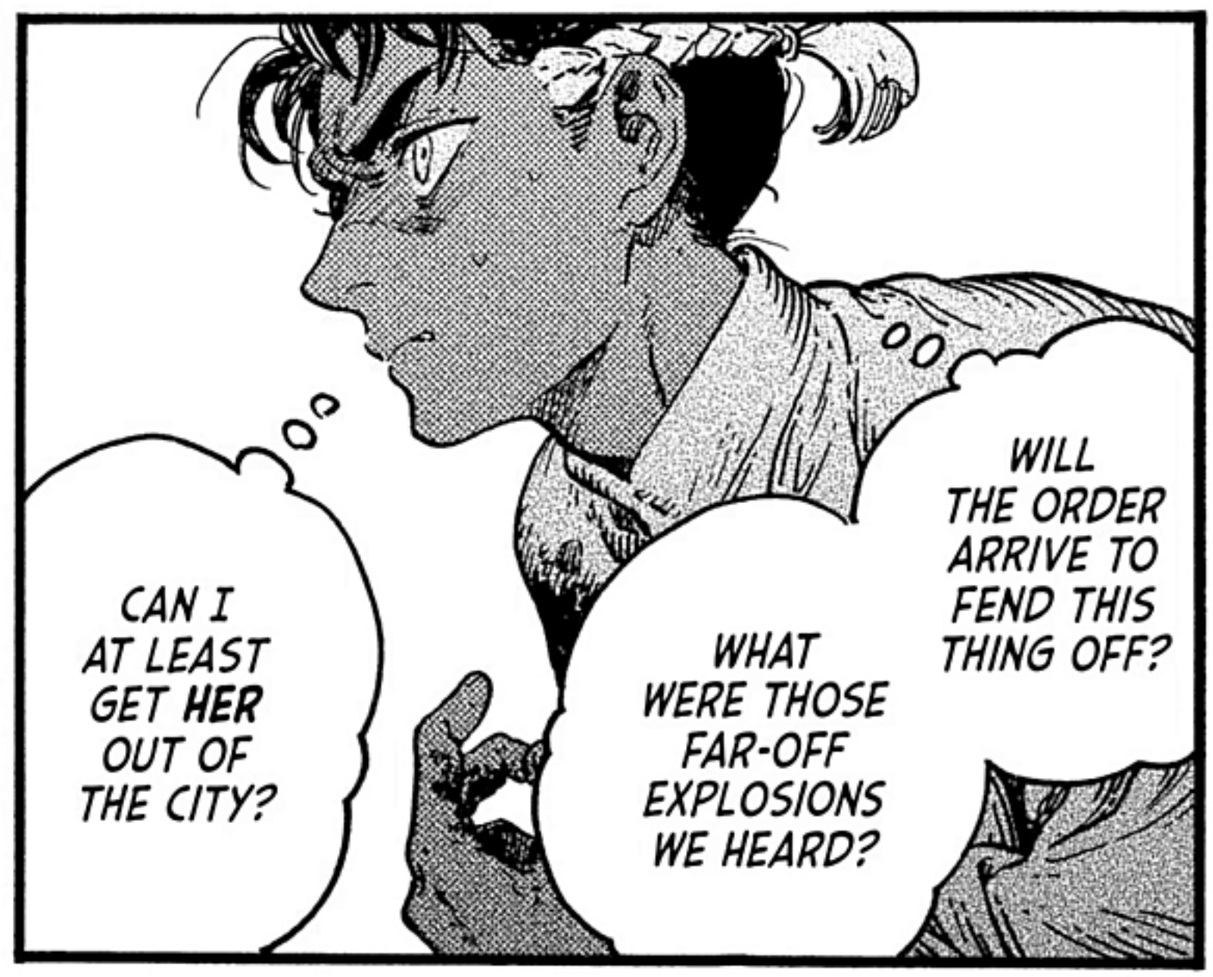
I'LL BE FINE. IT'S JUST A TINY BITE.

A-ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? DOES IT HURT?!

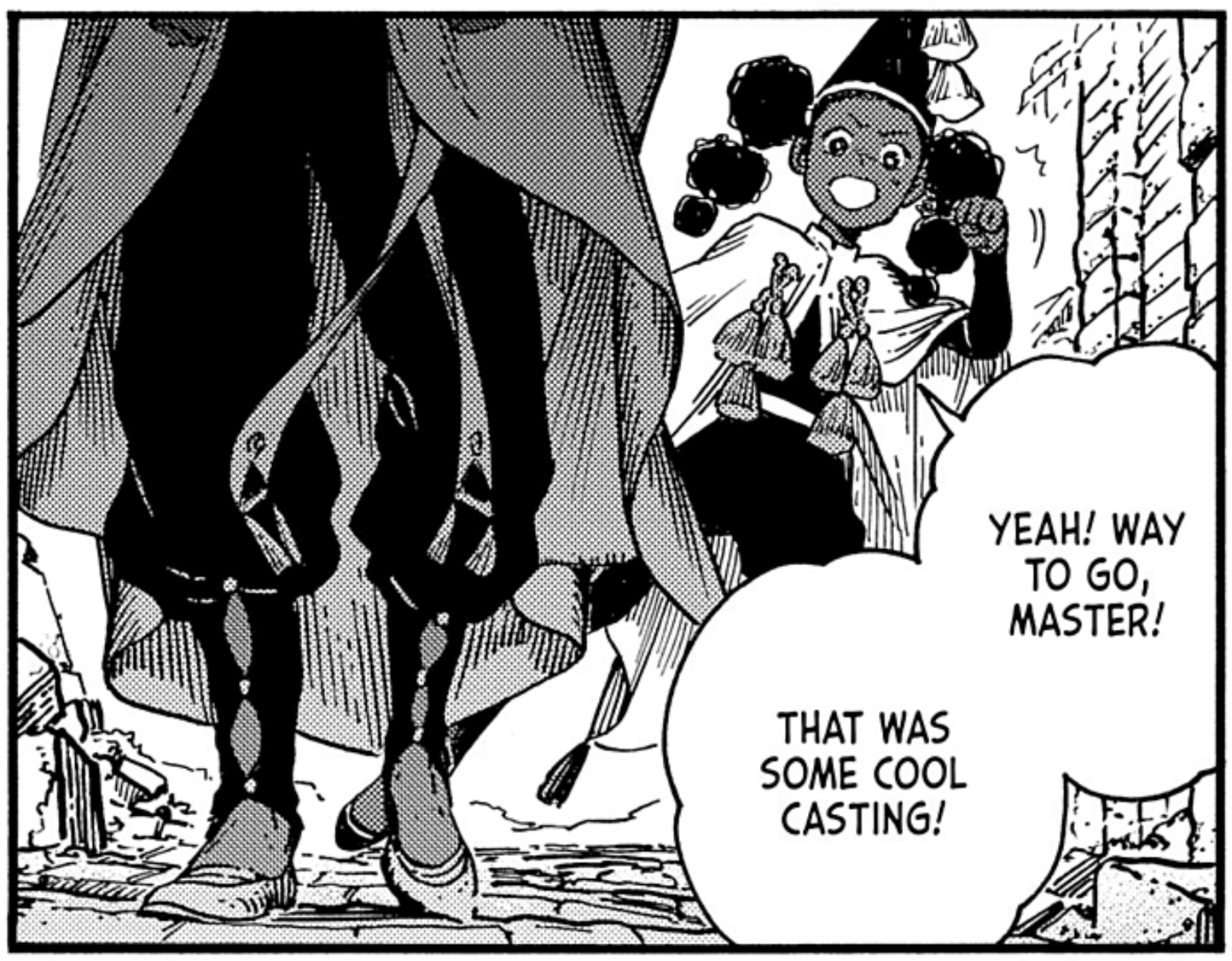
SHRIIING!!

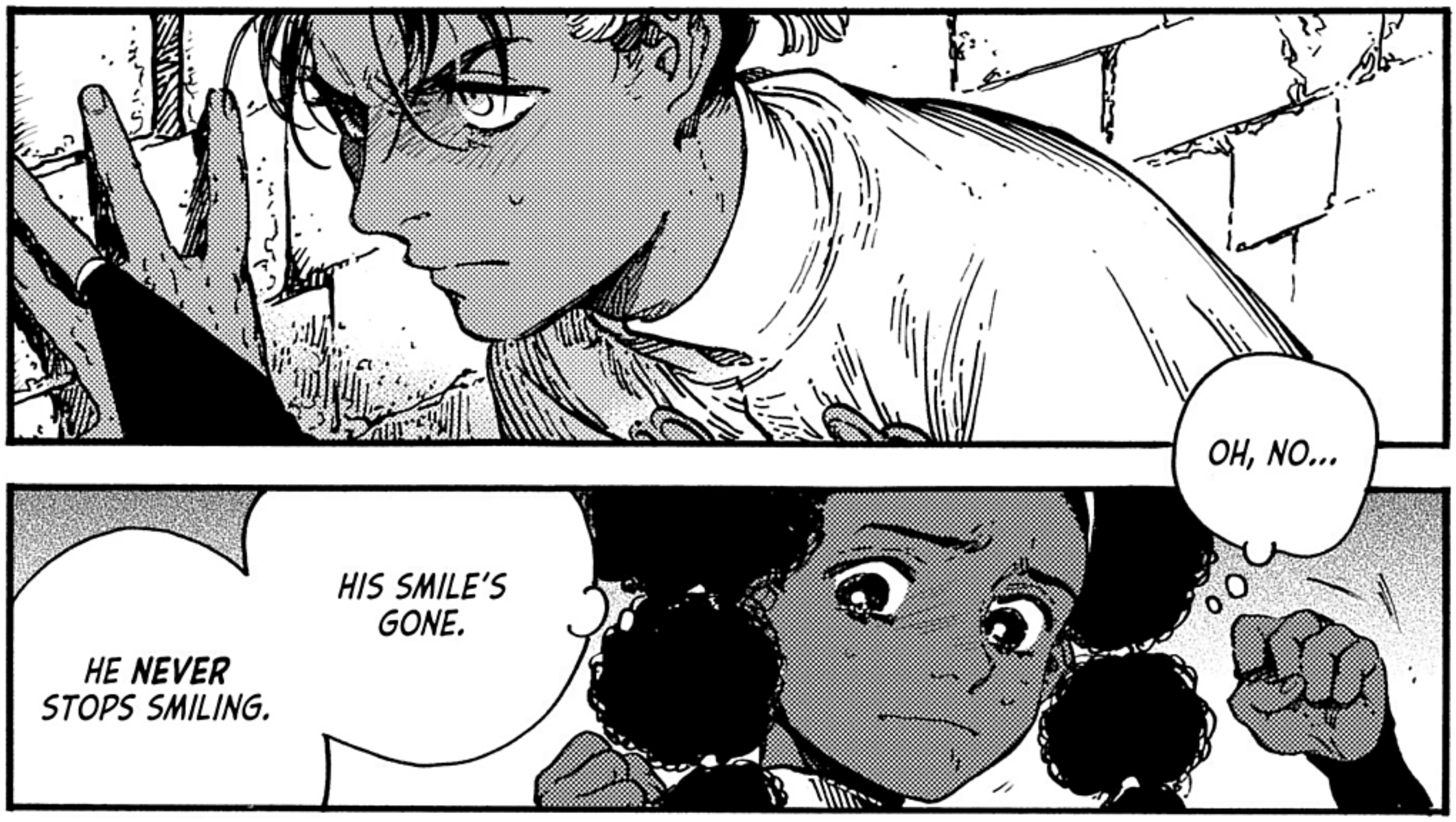
GUH! I'VE GOT A MILLION THOUGHTS RACING THROUGH MY HEAD...

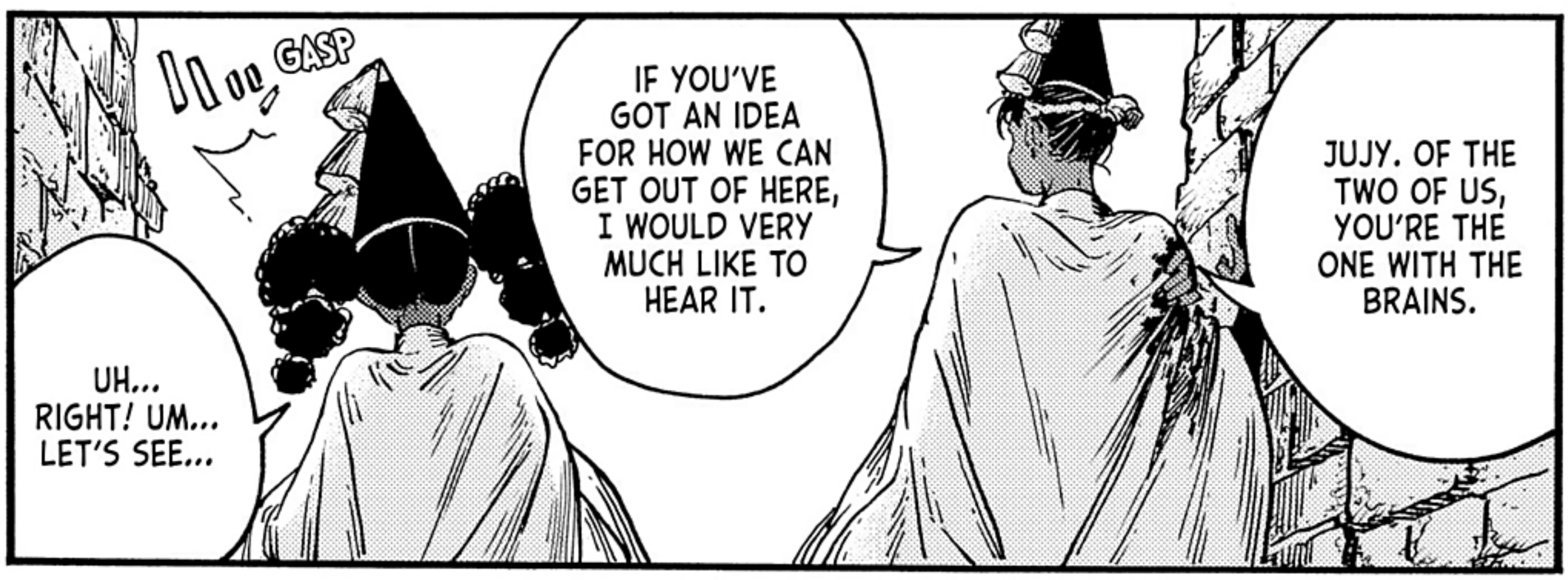
NO. YOU DID NOTHING WRONG.
BESIDES, THE PAIN'S ALREADY SUBSID-ING.
I'M SO SORRY. THIS IS ALL MY—

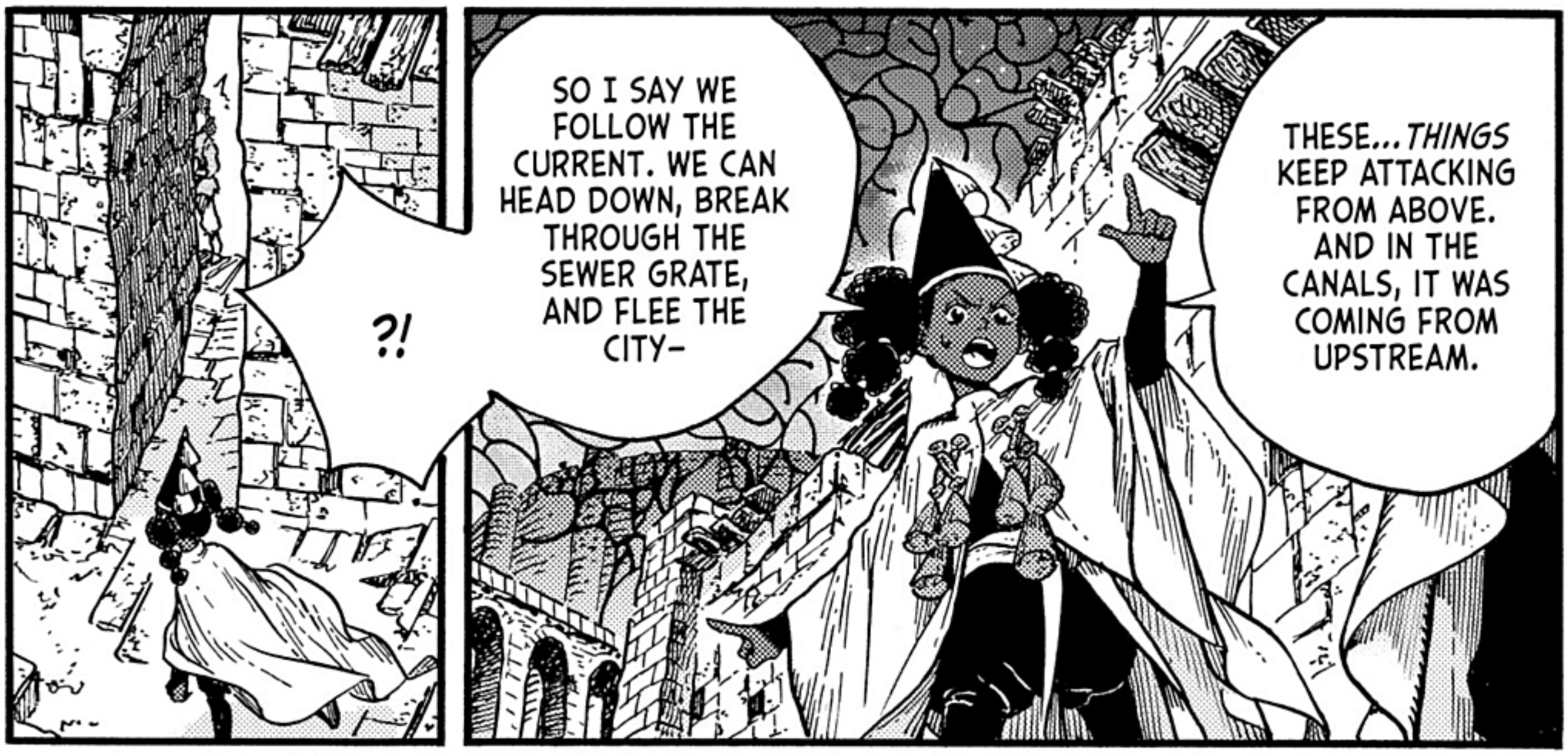

CAN I AT LEAST GET HER OUT OF THE CITY?
WHAT WERE THOSE FAR-OFF EXPLOSIONS WE HEARD?
WILL THE ORDER ARRIVE TO FEND THIS THING OFF?

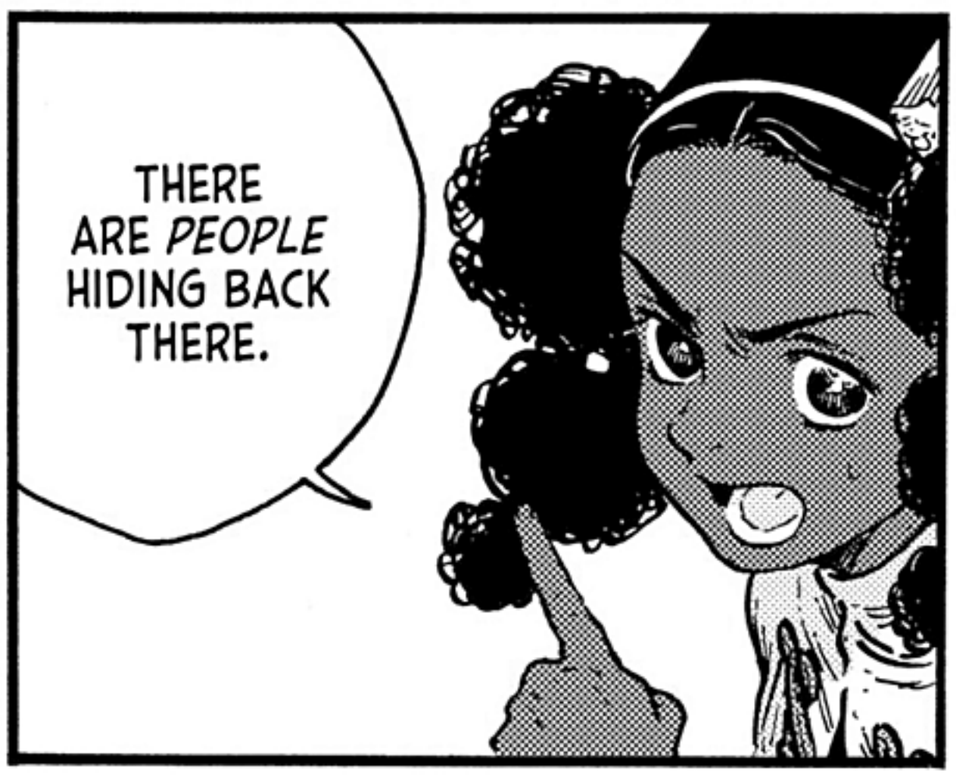
AND IF THERE'S ONE THING I HATE...
...IT'S THINKING BEFORE I ACT!

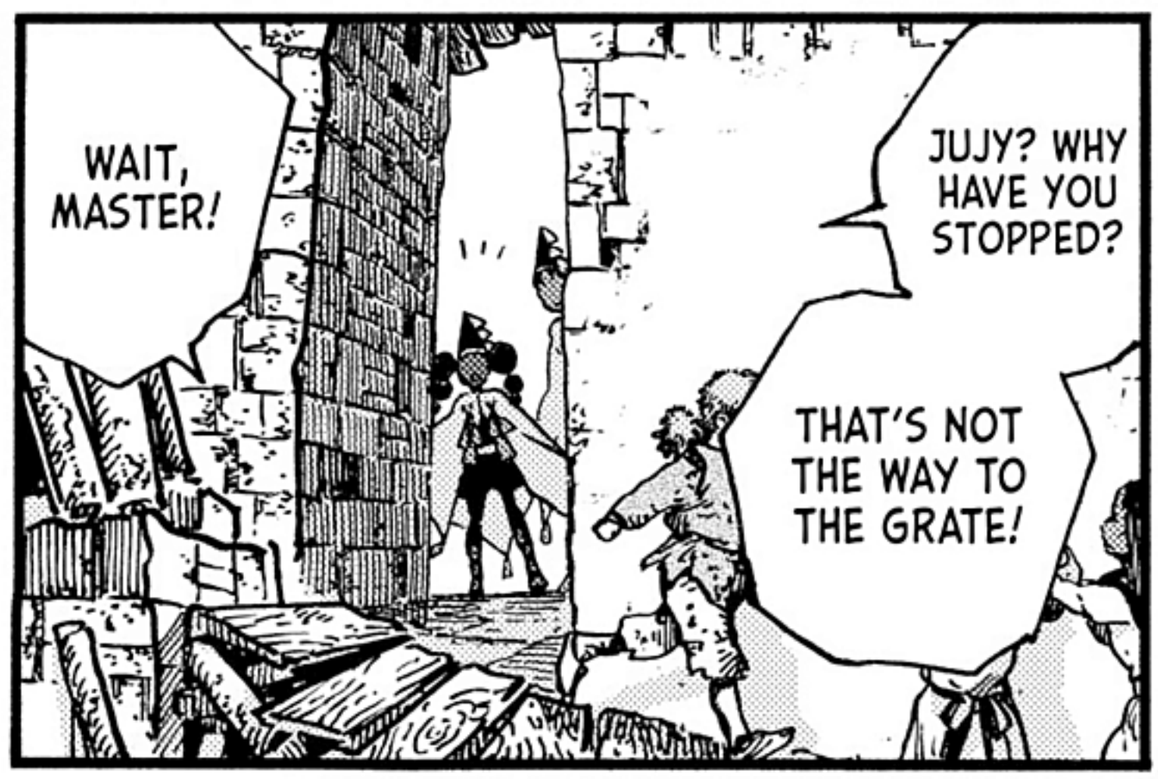

YEAH! WAY TO GO, MASTER!
THAT WAS SOME COOL CASTING!


OH, NO...
HIS SMILE'S GONE.
HE NEVER STOPS SMILING.


GASP
IF YOU'VE GOT AN IDEA FOR HOW WE CAN GET OUT OF HERE, I WOULD VERY MUCH LIKE TO HEAR IT.
JUJY. OF THE TWO OF US, YOU'RE THE ONE WITH THE BRAINS.
UH... RIGHT! UM... LET'S SEE...

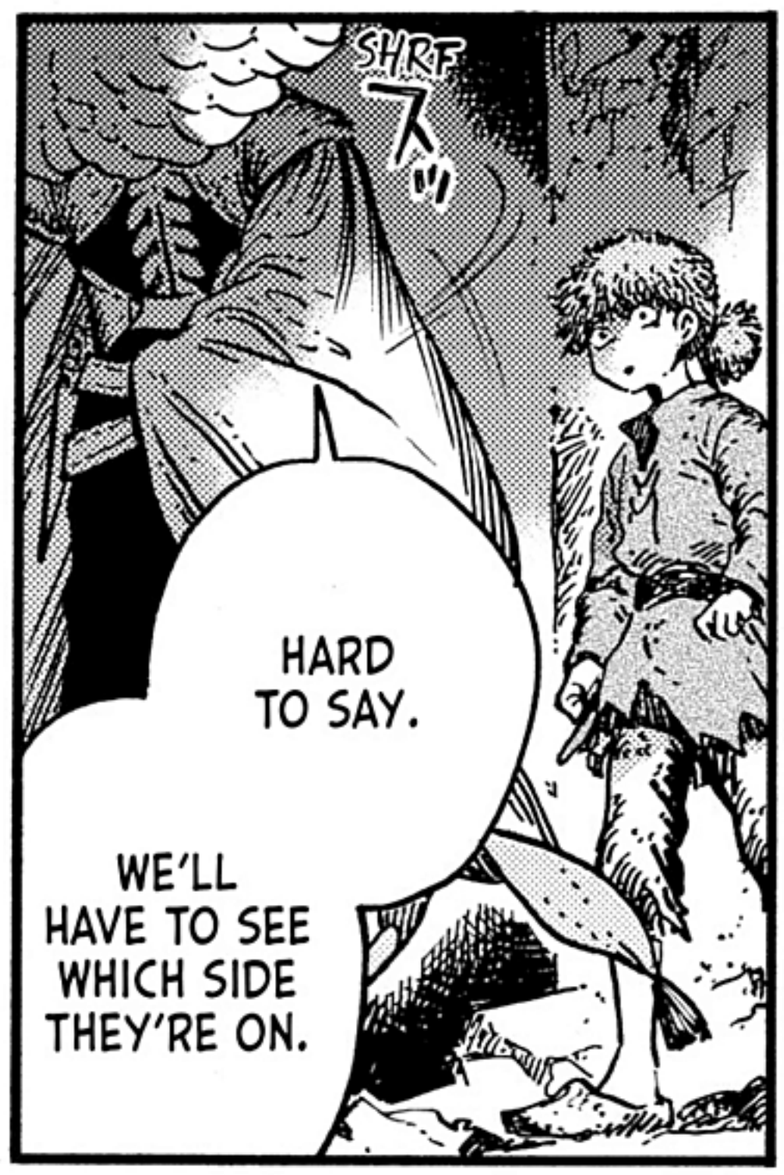

?!
SO I SAY WE FOLLOW THE CURRENT. WE CAN HEAD DOWN, BREAK THROUGH THE SEWER GRATE, AND FLEE THE CITY–
THESE...*THINGS* KEEP ATTACKING FROM ABOVE. AND IN THE CANALS, IT WAS COMING FROM UPSTREAM.


THERE ARE *PEOPLE* HIDING BACK THERE.


WAIT, MASTER!
JUJY? WHY HAVE YOU STOPPED?
THAT'S NOT THE WAY TO THE GRATE!

PLEASE DON'T GO OFF ALONE!
WAIT, JUJY!

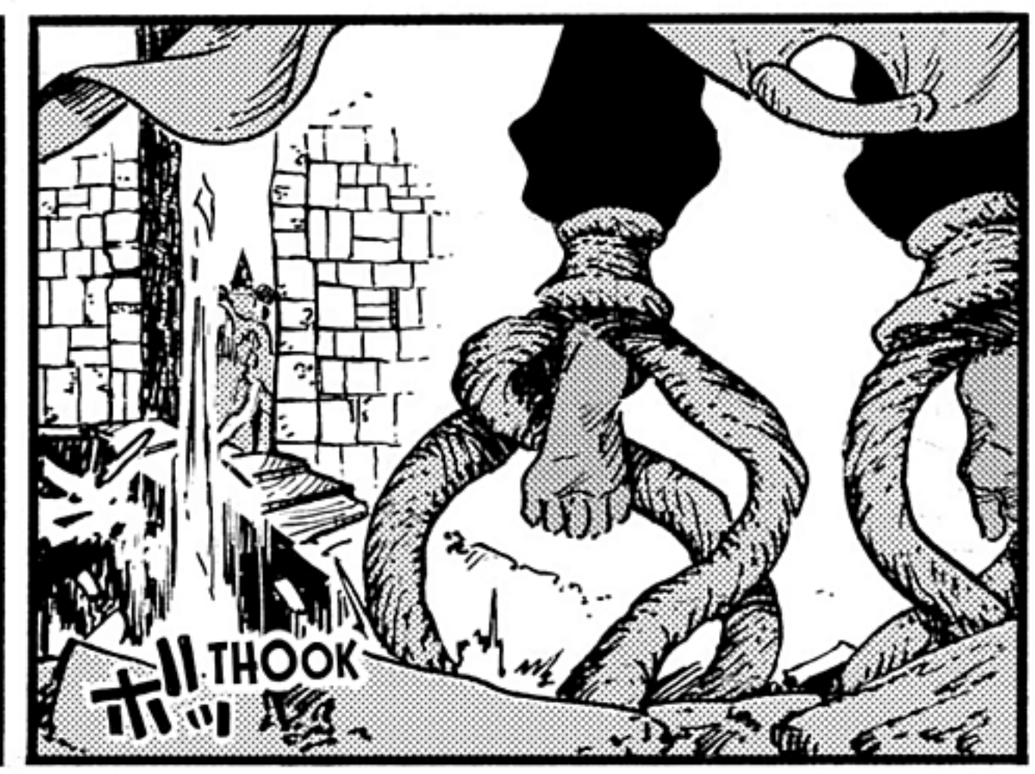
I WON'T BE LONG.
I BET THEY'RE RESIDENTS OF THE MUCKPOOL WHO GOT LEFT BEHIND.
WAIT HERE. I'LL GET THEM TO FOLLOW US.

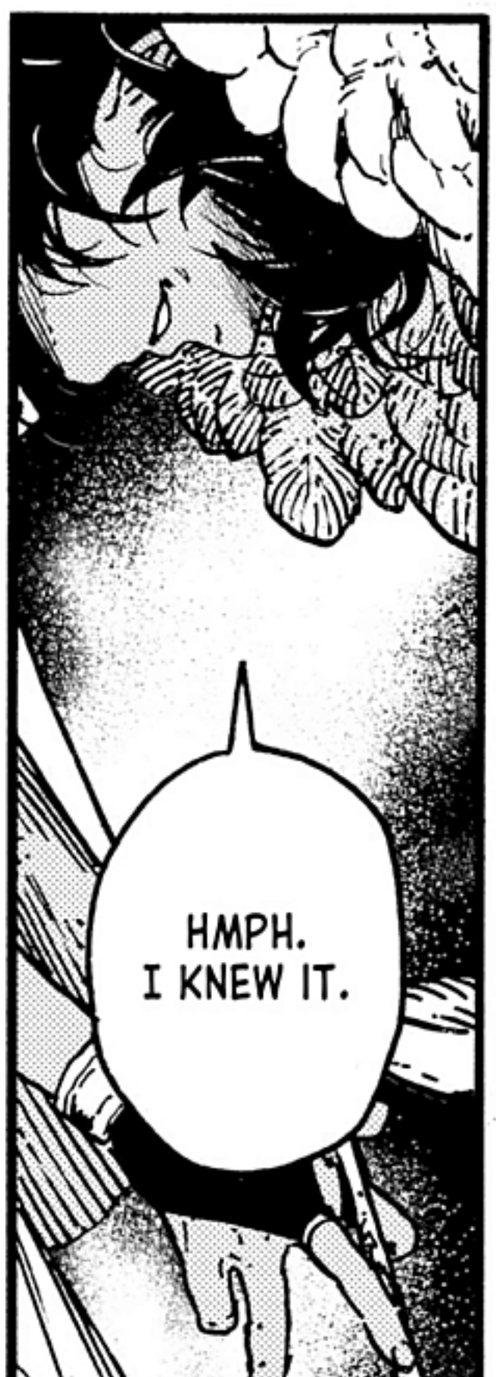

SHRF
HARD TO SAY.
WE'LL HAVE TO SEE WHICH SIDE THEY'RE ON.

DID YOUR FRIENDS COME TO FIND US?!
HEY! DOES THAT MEAN THEY'RE HERE FOR YOU?

YEAH. TWO MORE OF 'EM! I'M SURE OF IT!
...AND THEY'RE WITCHES ?!

KA
KLAMP
...HUH?


THOOK


HMPH. I KNEW IT.

JUJY, GET BACK!
STAY AWAY FROM THAT WITCH!

WE'RE STUCK IN A *NIGHTMARE*, AND YOU STUPID POINTED CAPS...
FWIP
...STILL THINK IT'S A GOOD IDEA TO TURN YOUR SPELLS ON *PEOPLE*...
...WHILE THERE'S A *MONSTER* SLITHERIN' AT YOUR BACK.
WHAT GIVES?
WHAT

MASTER HIEHART, NO!

NO!

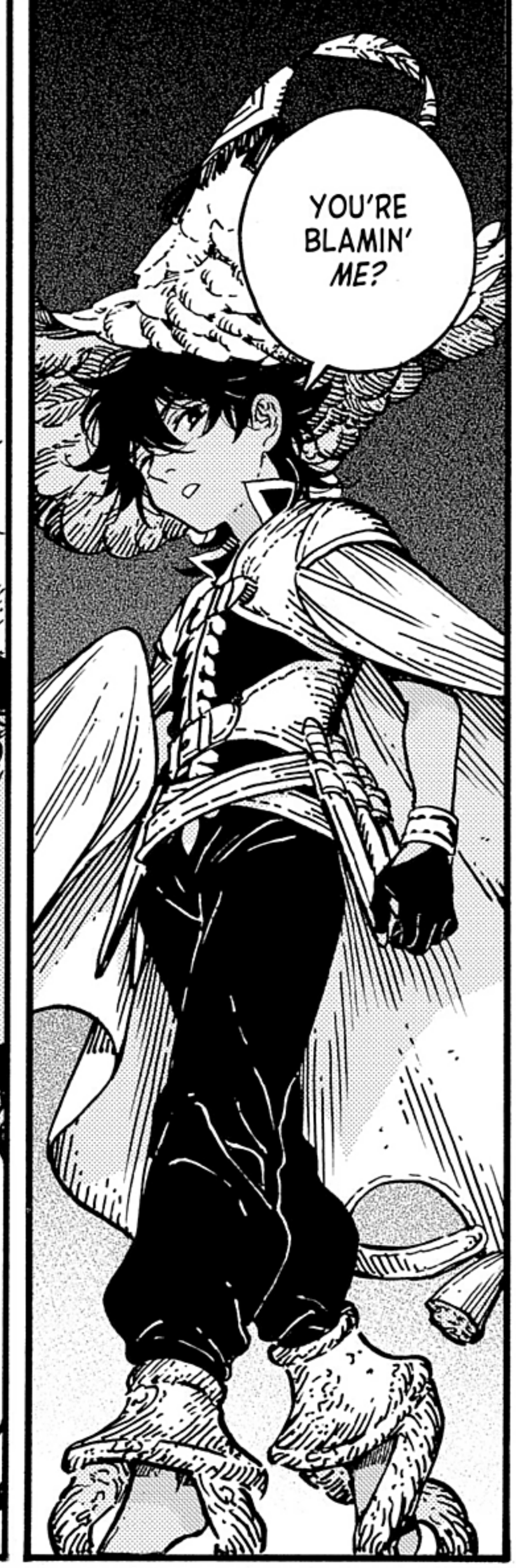
J...!
ZWRM

STOP!
MAKE IT STOP!
SAVE HIM!
TCH.
HOW CAN YOU JUST STAND THERE?!

SWRWHK
SPLAK
MASTER HIEHART!
KRTMP
SERI-OUSLY?

TH...
THEN EXPLAIN YOUR-SELF...
EXPLAIN *THOSE.*

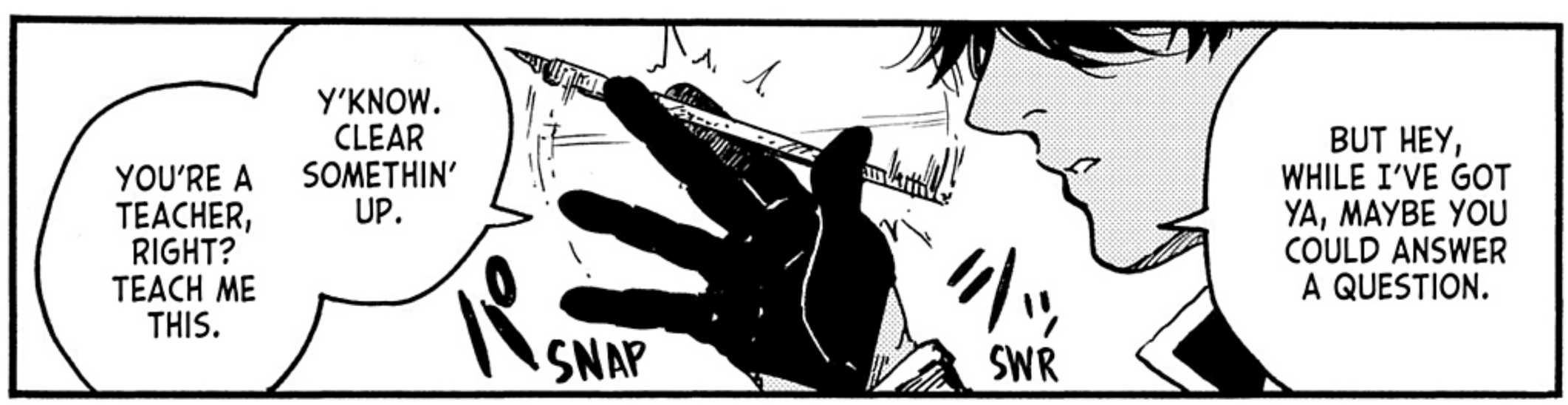
YOU TURNED YOUR BACKS...
...AND YOU PAID THE PRICE FOR IT. NONE OF *US* DID ANYTHING WRONG.


YOU'RE BLAMIN' *ME?*

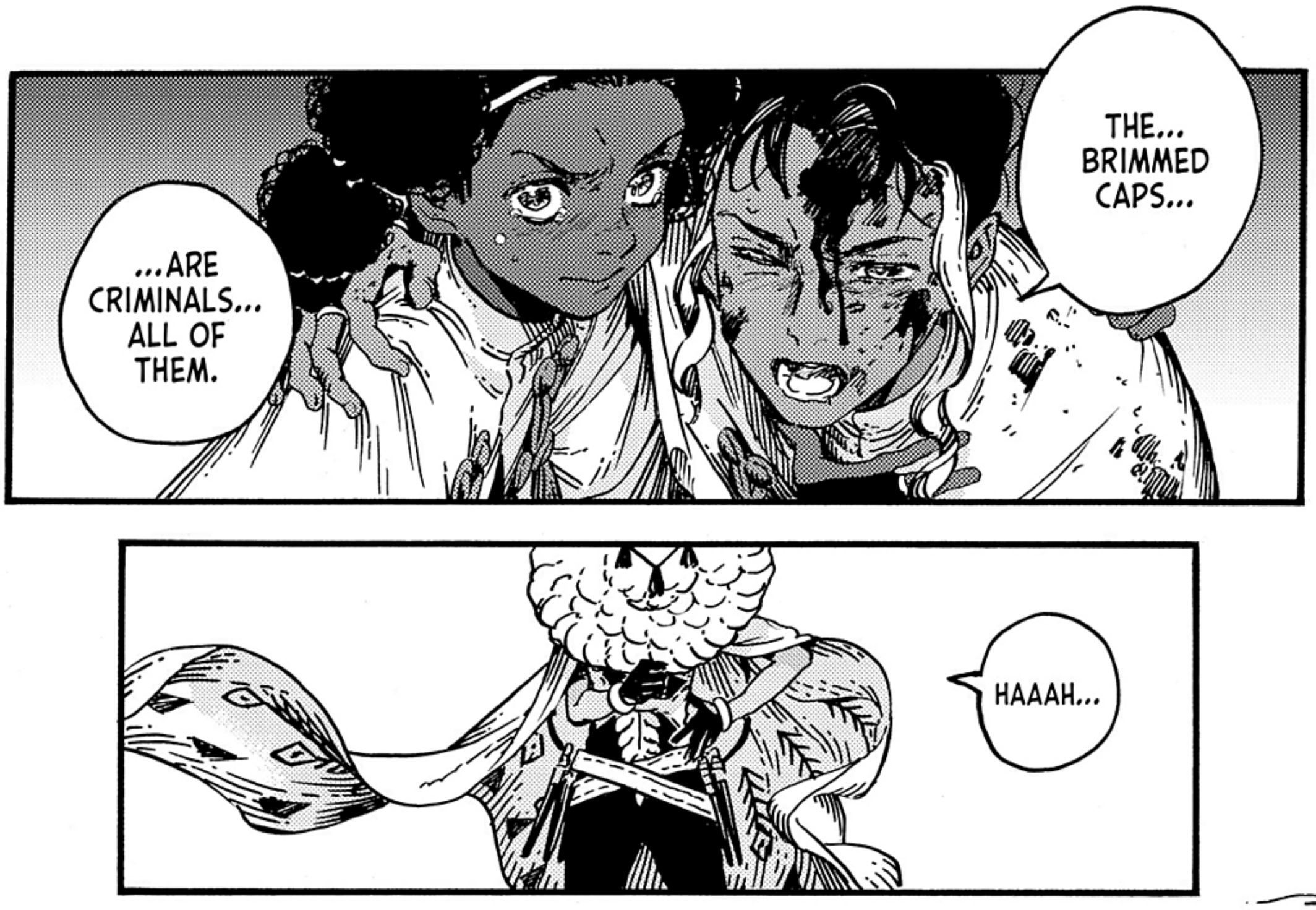
WHAT'RE YOU TALKIN' ABOUT?

OH. YOU MEAN THE TATTOOS?

Hff
Hff
Hff
TURNIN' BACK TIME ON A FEW BODIES TO BUY 'EM A CHANCE.
I'M JUST OUT HERE SAVIN' WHOEVER I CAN.


YOU'RE A TEACHER, RIGHT? TEACH ME THIS.
Y'KNOW. CLEAR SOMETHIN' UP.
SNAP
SWR
BUT HEY, WHILE I'VE GOT YA, MAYBE YOU COULD ANSWER A QUESTION.

DO THEY MAKE ME A *BAD PERSON?*
ARE THE SPELLS I'M CASTIN' REALLY THAT EVIL?



STRAIGHT FROM THE MUCKPOOL.

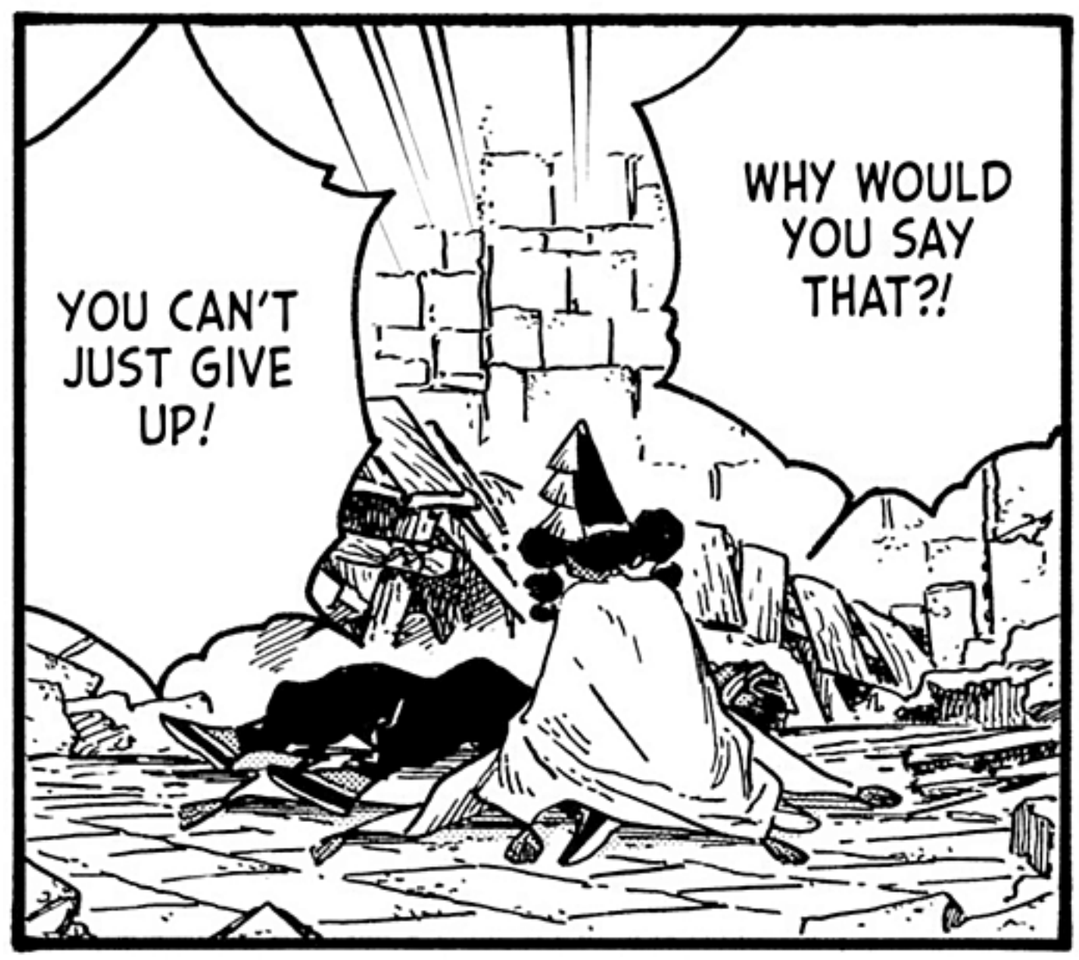
Chapter 71 ♦ End

Witch Hat Atelier

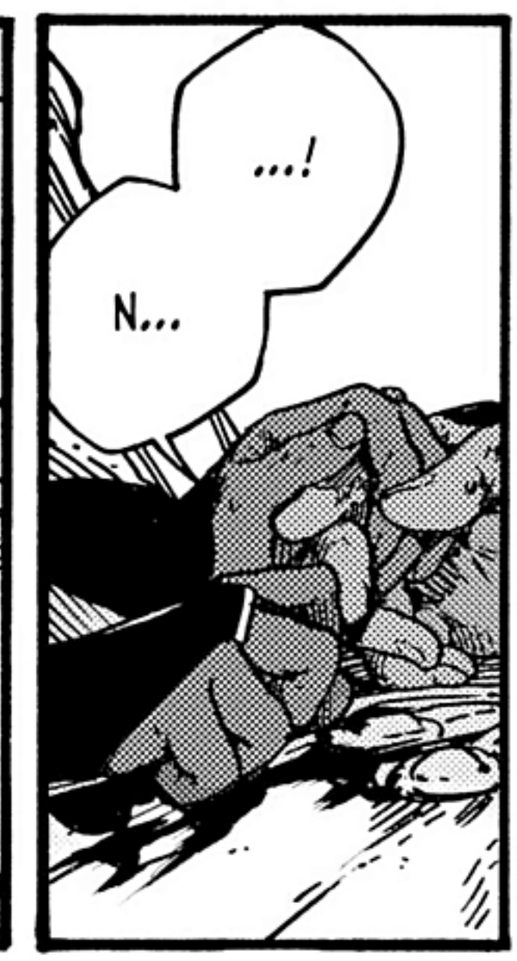
Chapter 72

...
ゴクリ
GULP

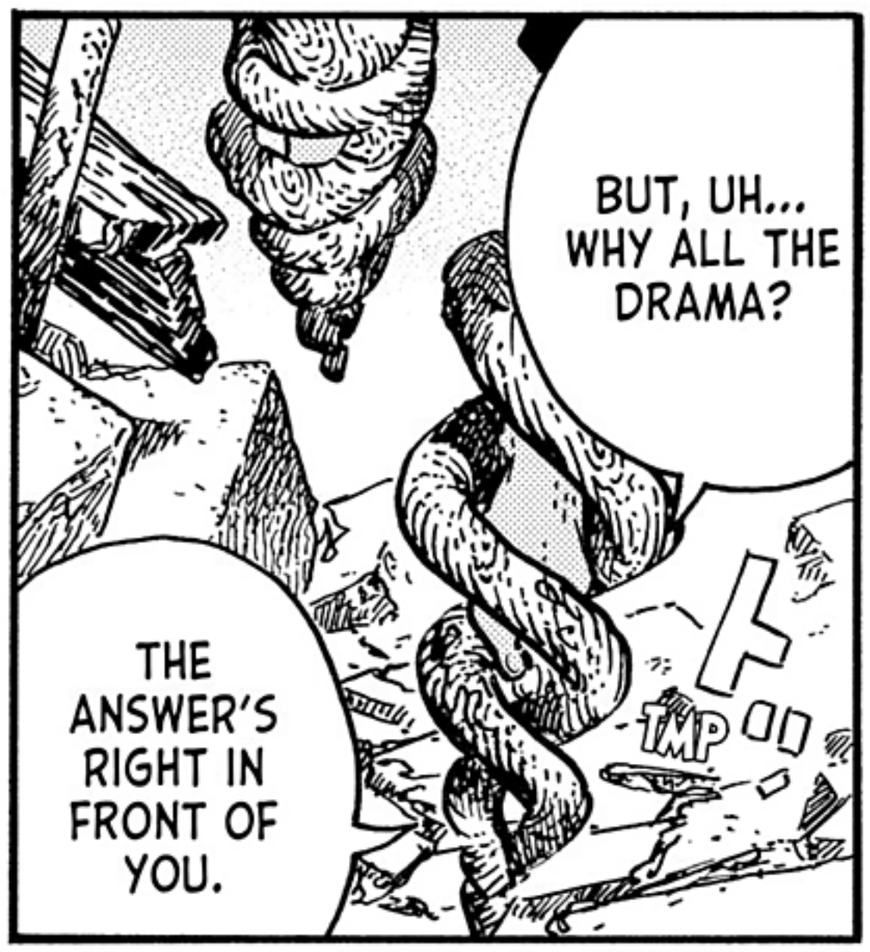
Y...YOU'RE THE CLEVEREST, MOST CAPABLE APPRENTICE I COULD HAVE EVER ASKED FOR.
FAR MORE THAN A MASTER LIKE ME DESERVES... AND I'M VERY PROUD OF YOU...
ЭО...
TRMBL
JUJY...
I WANT YOU TO KNOW...
MASTER?!
I...
I KNOW YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT.
YOU CAN STILL MAKE IT OUT OF THE CITY...
...BY YOURSELF.


YOU CAN'T JUST GIVE UP!
WHY WOULD YOU SAY THAT?!

NO! DON'T TALK LIKE THAT!

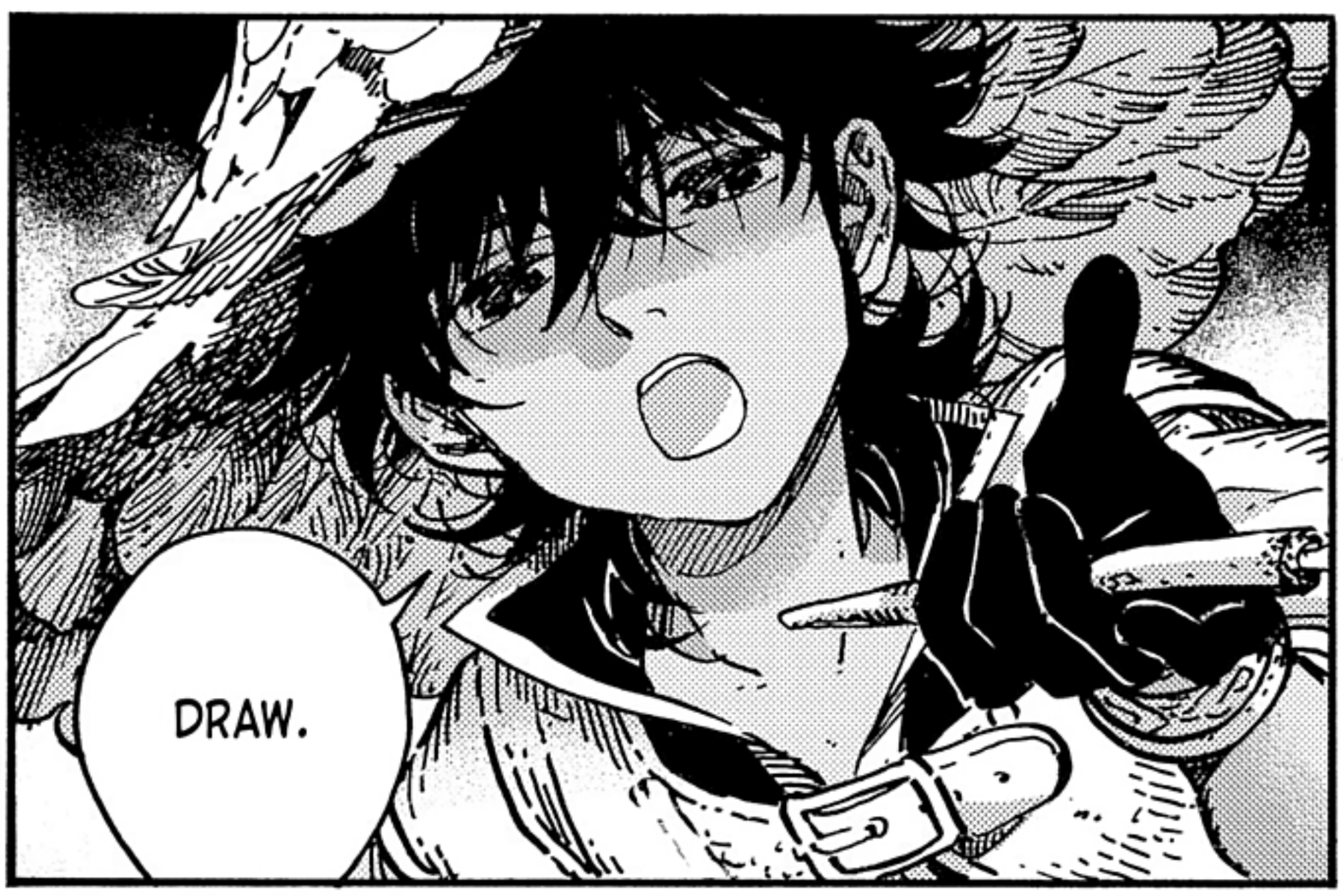

...!
N...

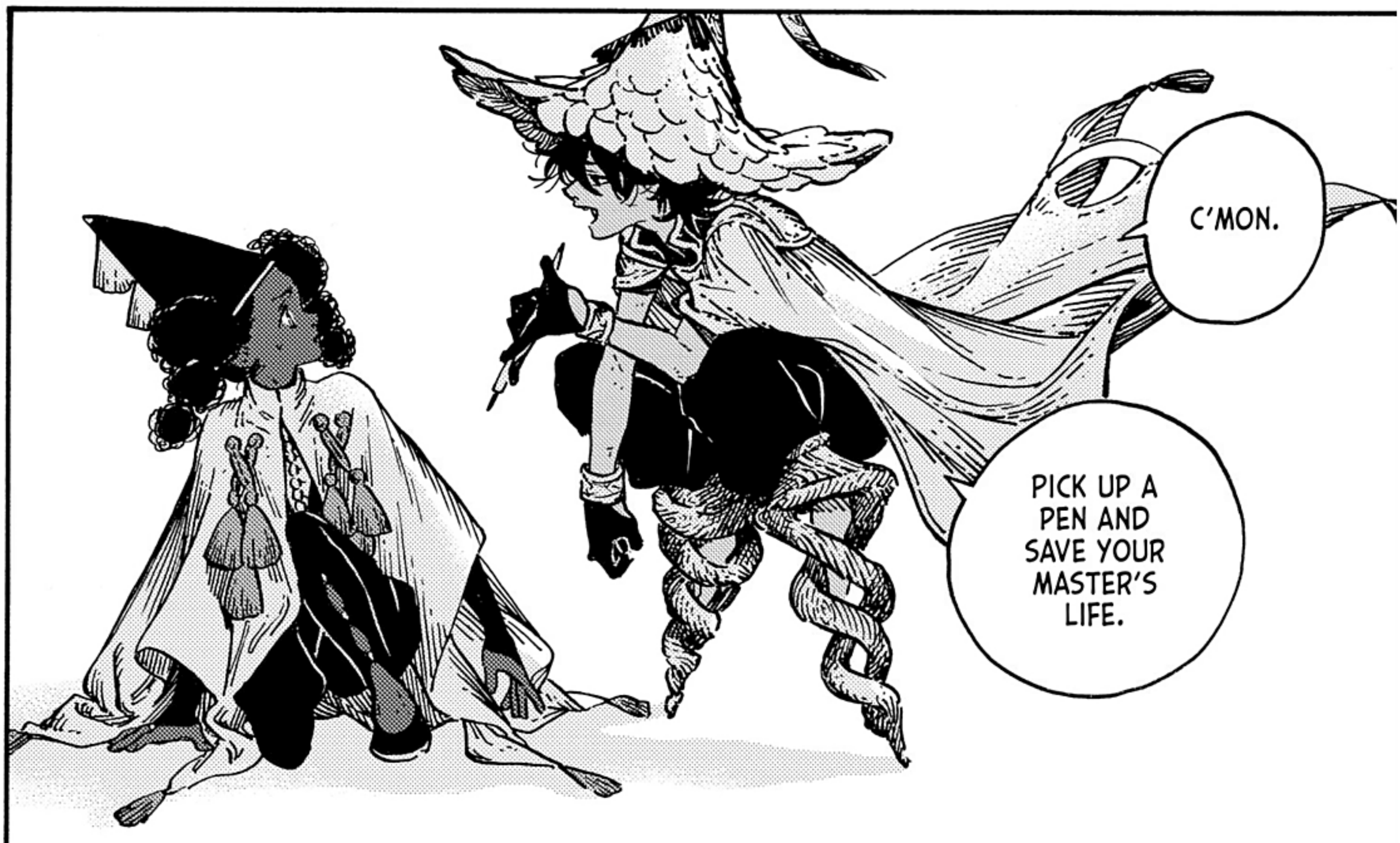
I'M NOT GOING TO LEAVE MY TEACHER BEHIND! I WON'T!
OH, JUJY...
STOP TALKING LIKE YOU'RE GOING TO DIE!

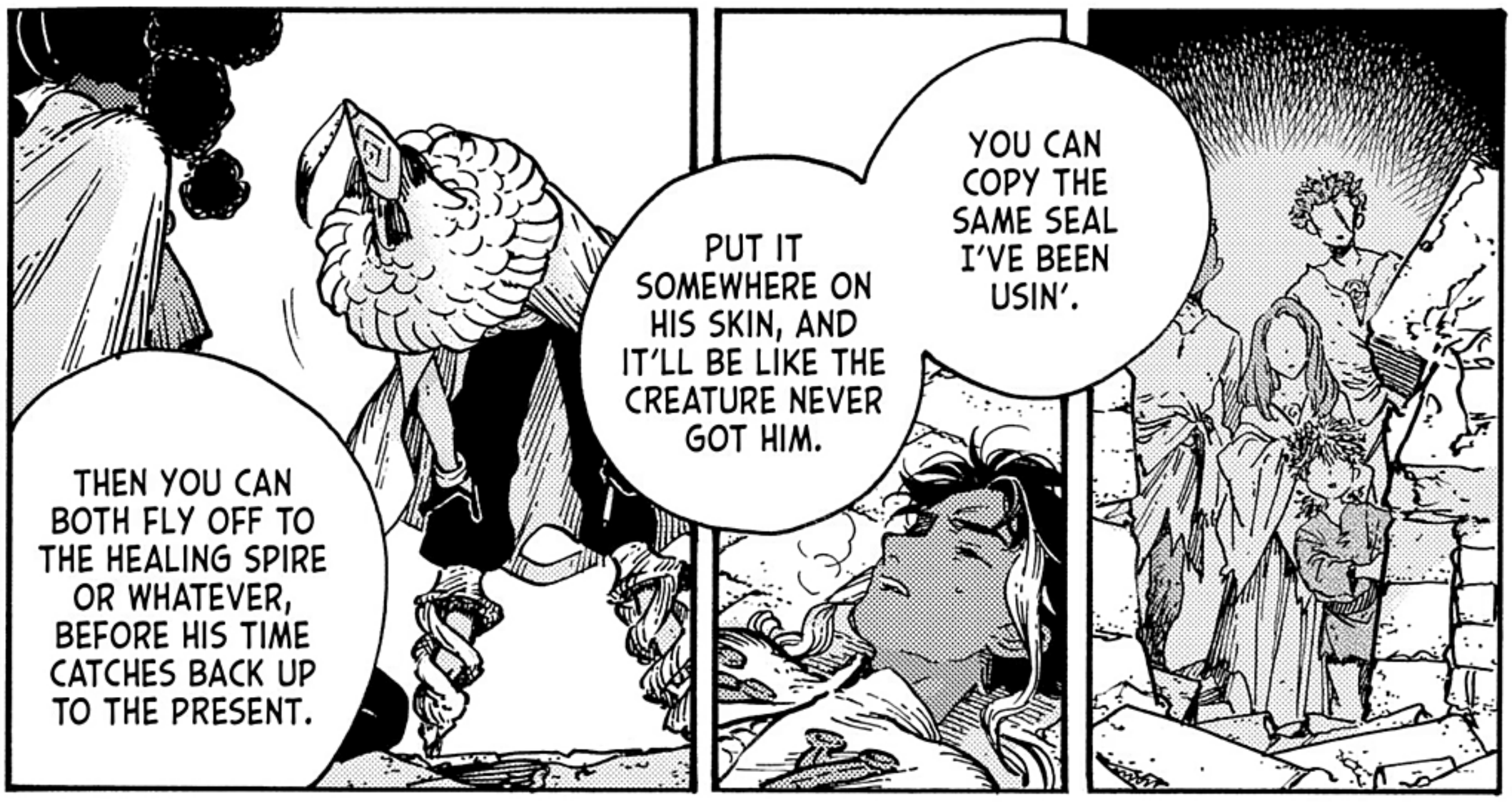

BUT, UH... WHY ALL THE DRAMA?
THE ANSWER'S RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU.
TMP

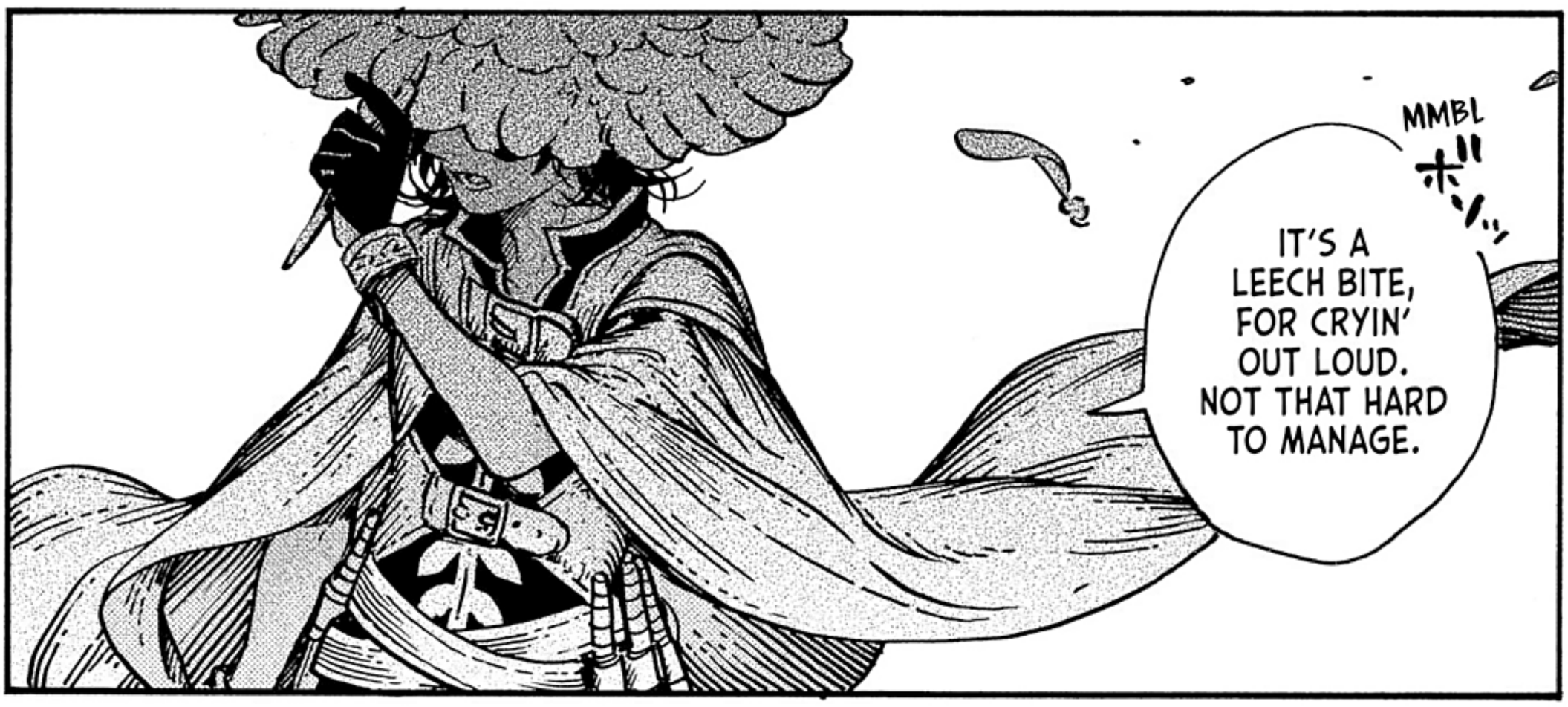
FWIP

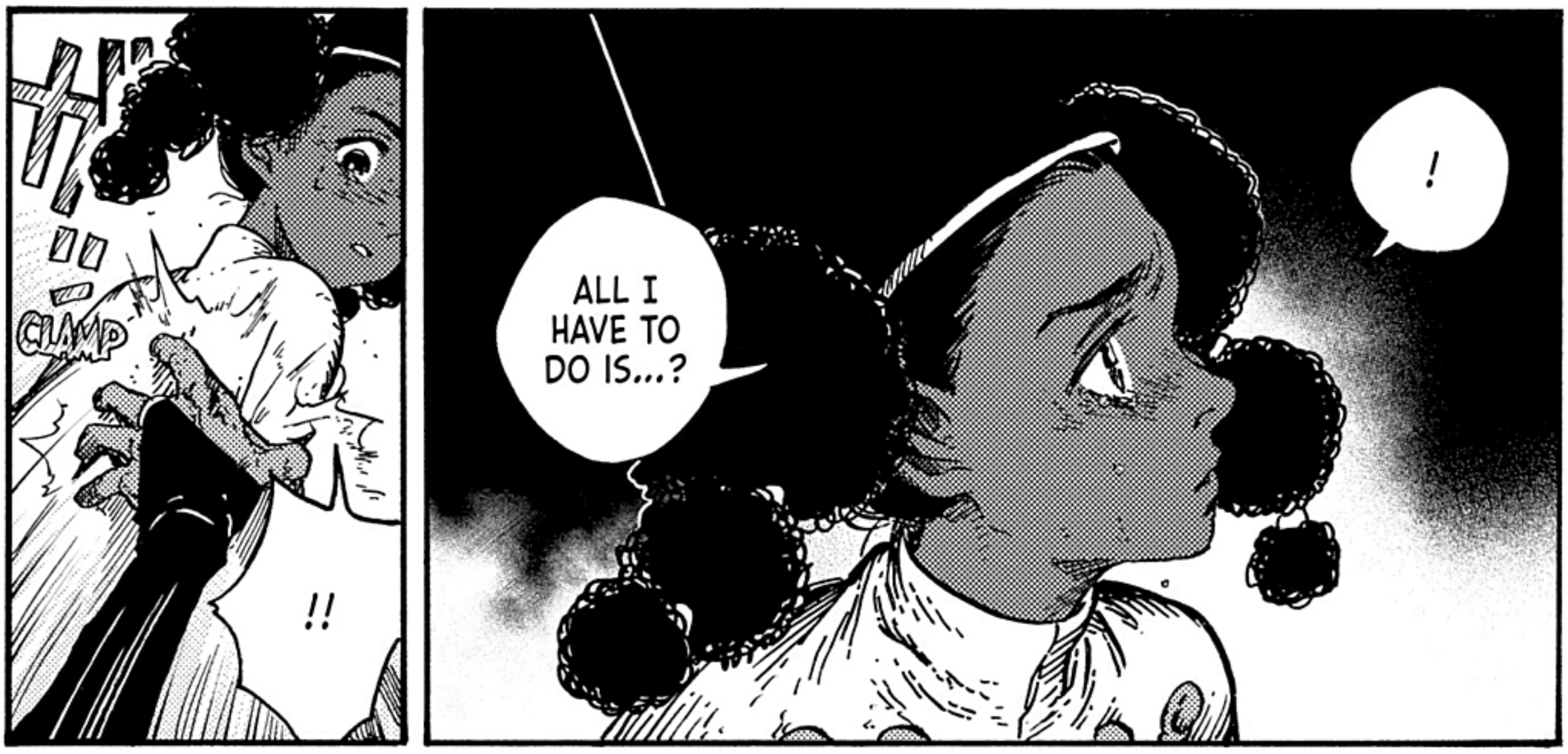
SORRY TO SPOIL THE MOMENT.
FWRL


DRAW.


C'MON.
PICK UP A PEN AND SAVE YOUR MASTER'S LIFE.


THEN YOU CAN BOTH FLY OFF TO THE HEALING SPIRE OR WHATEVER, BEFORE HIS TIME CATCHES BACK UP TO THE PRESENT.
PUT IT SOMEWHERE ON HIS SKIN, AND IT'LL BE LIKE THE CREATURE NEVER GOT HIM.
YOU CAN COPY THE SAME SEAL I'VE BEEN USIN'.


MMBL
IT'S A LEECH BITE, FOR CRYIN' OUT LOUD. NOT THAT HARD TO MANAGE.


CLAMP
!!
ALL I HAVE TO DO IS...?
!

A SCHEME, HUH?
Hah!
MASTER, I JUST...
WAVR
ANOTHER BRIMMED CAP SCHEME.
IT'S A TRICK.
DON'T LISTEN TO HIM, JUJY.
I WANT YOU TO BE OKAY AGAIN!
I'D DO ANYTHING TO SAVE YOU!
YOU CAN'T DIE!
BUT...
BUT...!
"CRIMINALS. ALL OF THEM."

UGH! HOW LONG ARE YOU GONNA DRAG THIS OUT?!
HE'S ON THE VERGE OF DEATH!
YOU WANNA SIT THERE HESITATING UNTIL IT'S TOO LATE?!
TAKE OUT YOUR PEN AND DRAW!
SAVE HIS LIFE! DO IT!
EEK!

I WANNA HEAR YOU *SAY IT.*

ADMIT THAT WHAT I'M DOING IS RIGHT!

YOU PEOPLE AND YOUR PACT. I DUNNO HOW YOU STAND IT.

LIVIN' IN YOUR MESSED UP WORLD WHERE YOU GOTTA CHOOSE BETWEEN YOUR *RULES* AND YOUR *LIFE.*

...

SHWRRR

THERE YOU ARE!
OH, THANK GOODNESS.
I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU, CUSTAS!
SWR
LAY DOWN YOUR WAND AND STEP AWAY FROM THE WITCH, YOU BRIMMED CAP FIEND!
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'D BEST NOT TRY ANYTHING FUNNY.
ZRSH
WH...
WHAT'S GOIN' ON?
WHY DO YOU ALWAYS GOTTA SHOW UP AT THE WORST...
...POS-SIBLE...
WH...?!
IT'S THE KNIGHTS MORALIS!
OH, COME ON! YOU GUYS AGAIN?!

WHAT'RE YOU DOIN' WITH DAGDA?!

GET AWAY FROM HIM!

FWIK

KTING

CUSTAS?!

!!

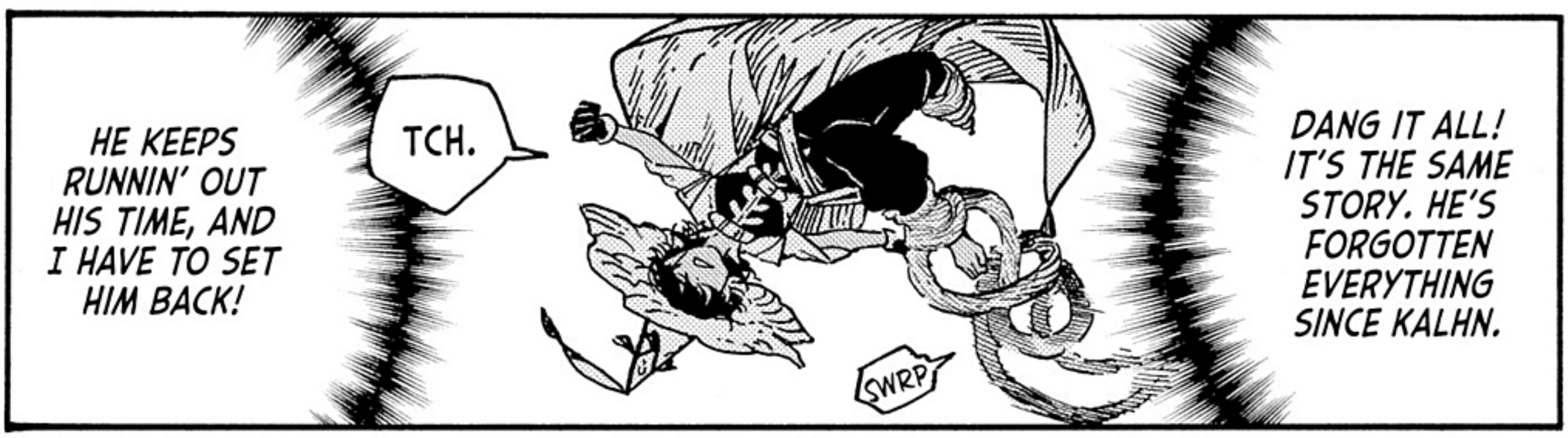
STAY BACK!

PSH!!

CUSTAS! IT'S A MIRACLE!
HOW ARE YOU ABLE TO WALK AGAIN?!

?!

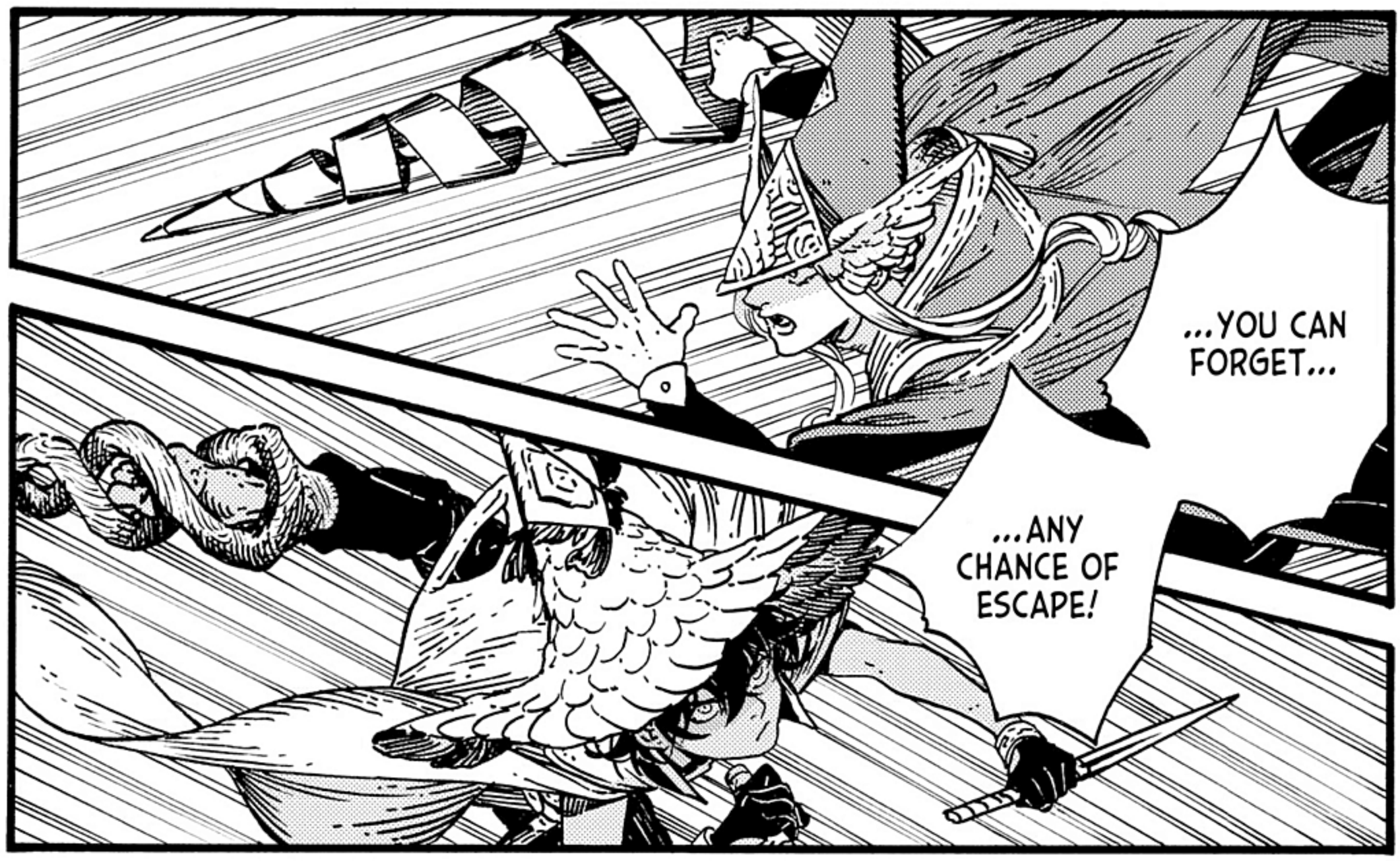
DAGDA, RUN!
ONE OF HER FRIENDS ATTACKED YOU IN THIS PART OF TOWN THE OTHER DAY!
CAN'T YOU TELL?! SHE'S NOT ON OUR SIDE!

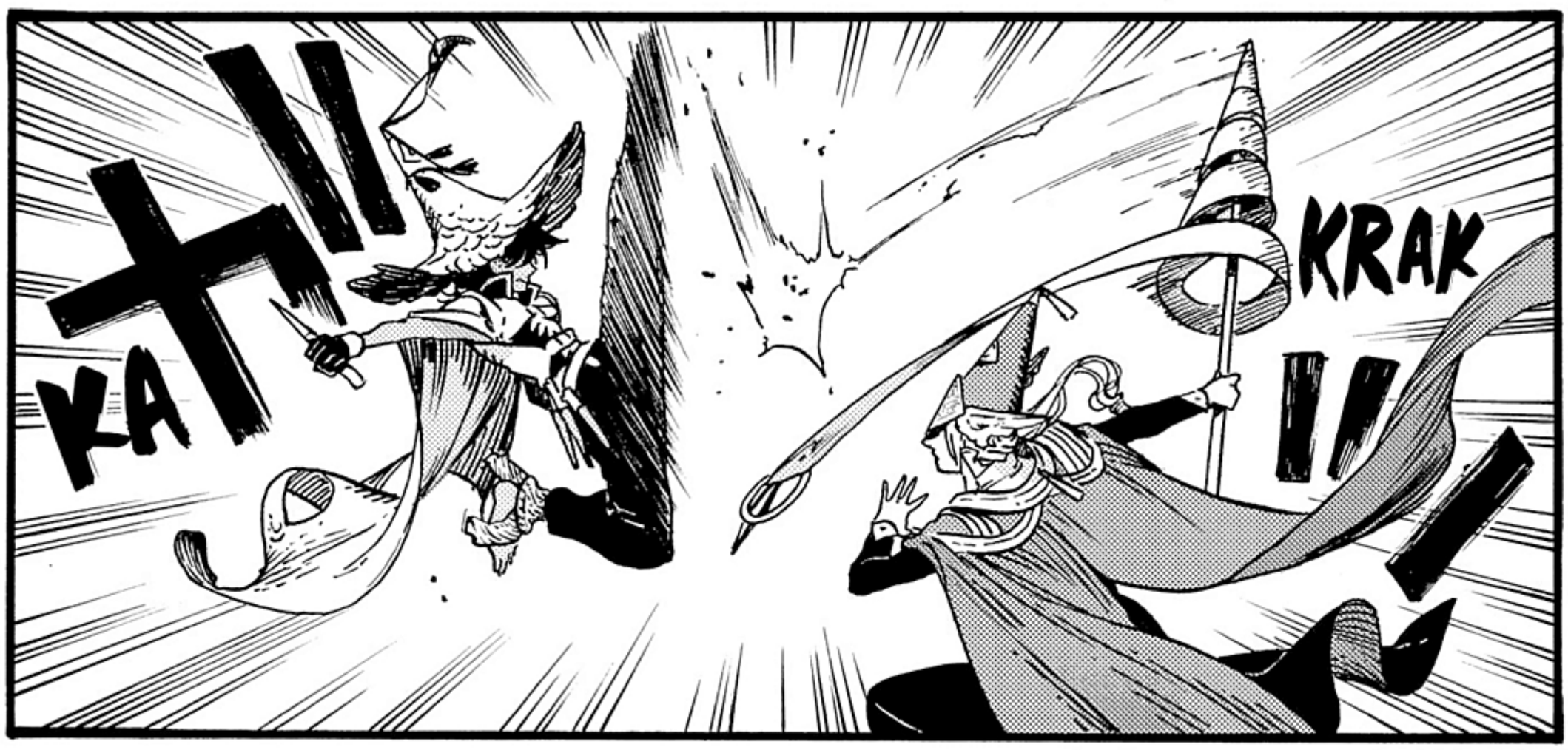

HE KEEPS RUNNIN' OUT HIS TIME, AND I HAVE TO SET HIM BACK!
TCH.
SWRP
DANG IT ALL! IT'S THE SAME STORY. HE'S FORGOTTEN EVERYTHING SINCE KALHN.

THEN YOU'RE THE ONE. YOU'RE THE BRIMMED CAP WHO WIPED GALGA'S MIND.

ギュッ CLENCH
ANOTHER KNIGHT, YOU SAY? HERE IN THE MUCK-POOL?

AS A MEMBER OF THE ORDER, I WILL AVENGE MY FELLOW KNIGHT.
AND IF YOU'RE THE WITCH RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS CRUEL FATE...
KR
SHRK


...YOU CAN FORGET...
...ANY CHANCE OF ESCAPE!


KA
KRAK

WH... WHY ARE THE TWO OF YOU FIGHTING?

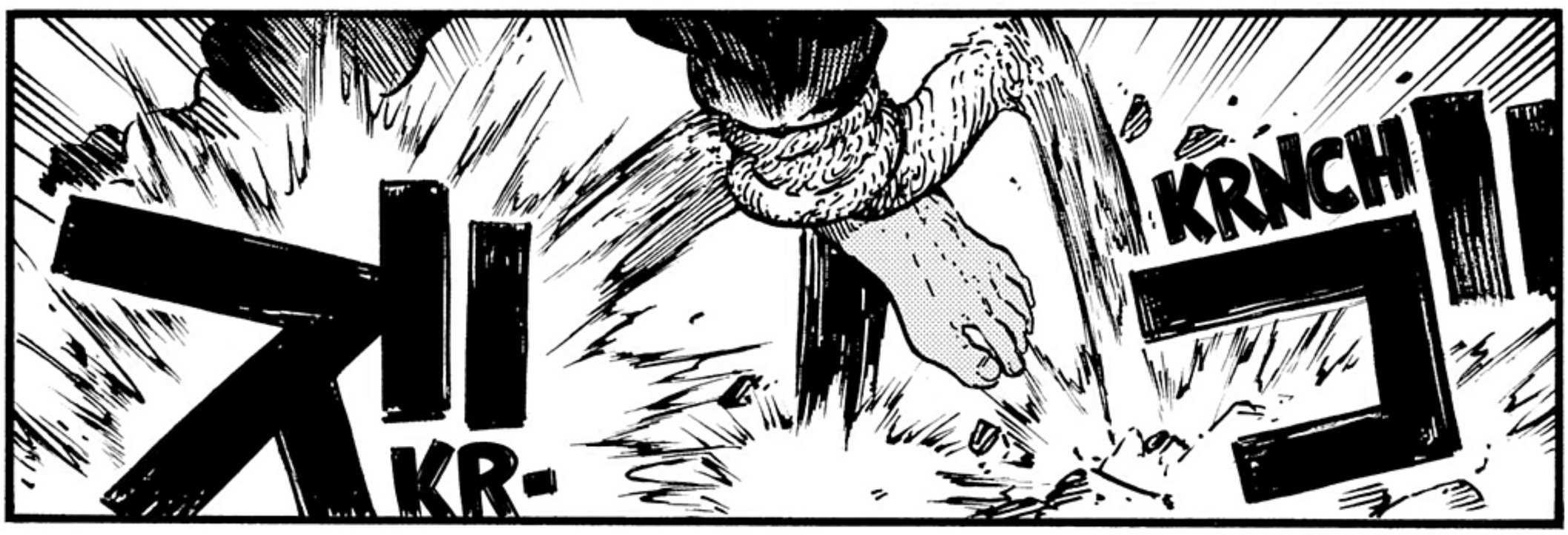
WHEN YOU WERE HURT AT THE RIVER, LULUCI CARRIED YOU TO KALHN!
NOW SHE'S BROUGHT ME SAFELY HERE TO FIND YOU! WE OWE HER OUR LIVES!
CUSTAS! HOW CAN YOU CALL HER OUR ENEMY?!
THAT BRIM HE PROUDLY BEARS IS PROOF!
HIS GUILT COULD NOT BE ANY PLAINER!
AND YOU, LULUCI! HOW CAN YOU ATTACK HIM?!
CUSTAS IS JUST A BOY!
HE WOULD NEVER HURT ONE OF YOUR COMRADES! THERE MUST BE A MISTAKE!
WHAT BEARING DOES THAT HAVE?!
B...
BRIM...? THE BRIM OF HIS *HAT?*

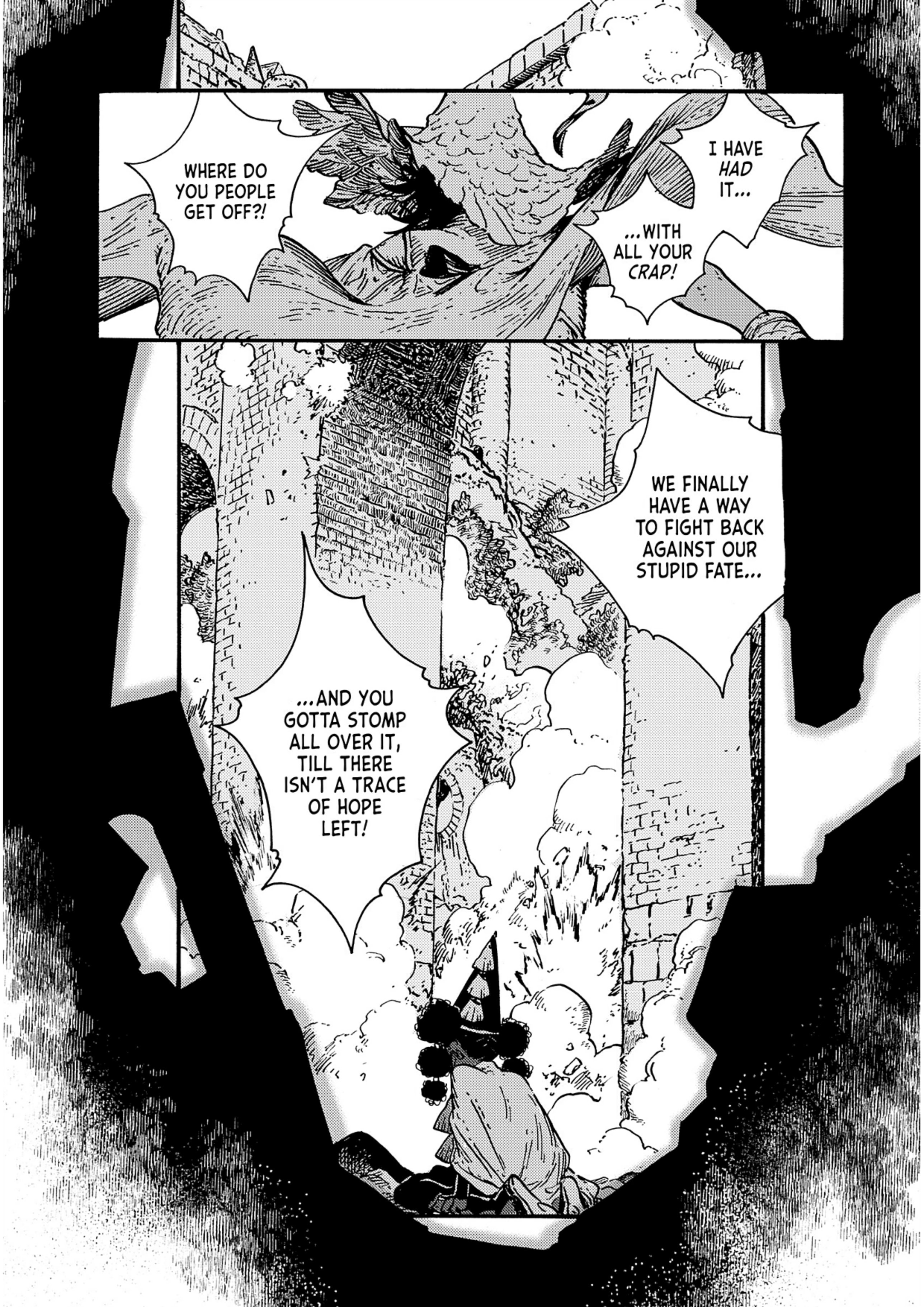
WHAM
Gah!

ZRSH
I TOLD YOU... TO STAND *BACK!*

PLEASE! LULUCI!
LET US TALK THIS OUT!

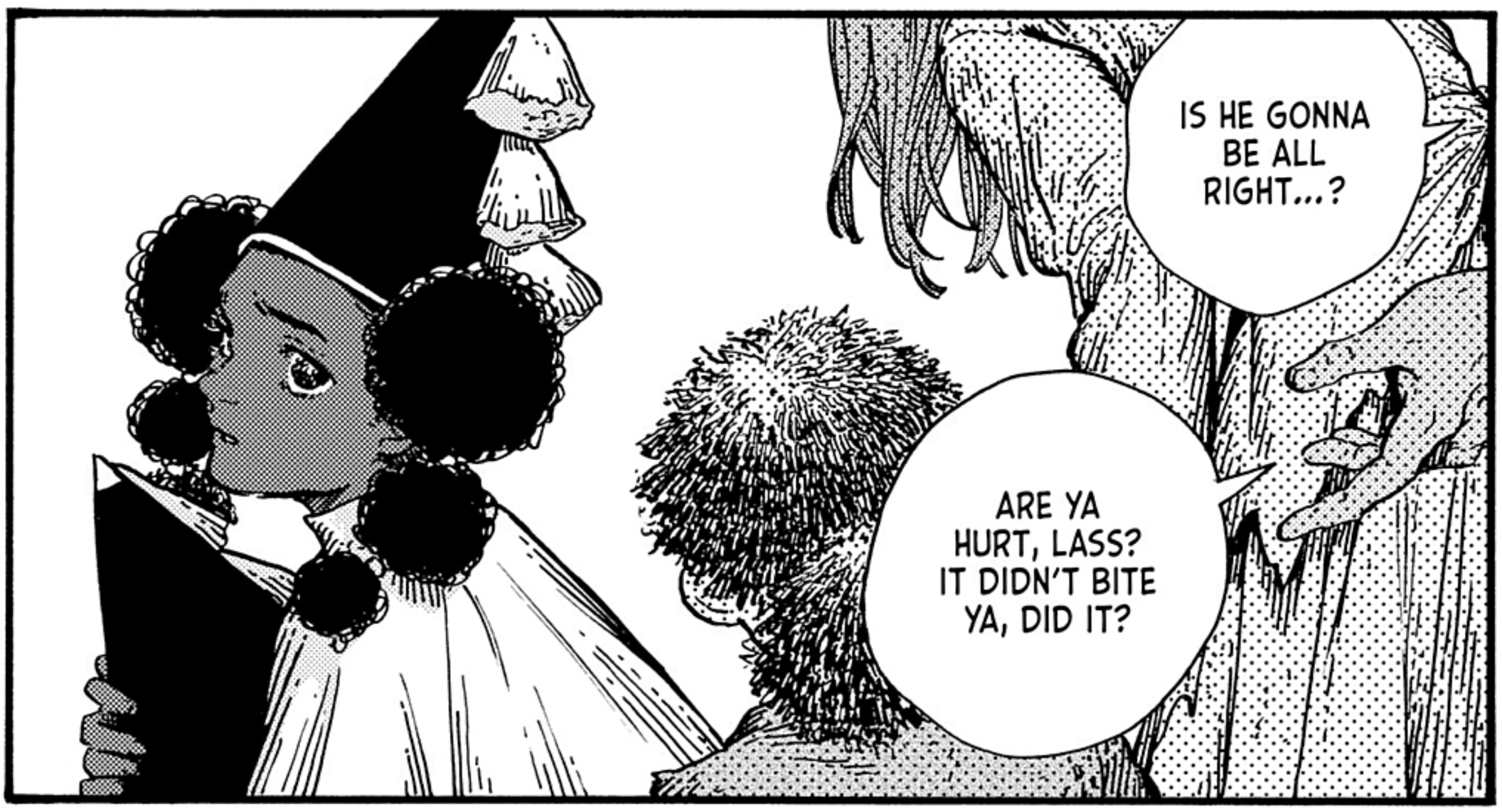
DON'T YOU *DARE* LAY A HAND ON DAGDA!


KR-
KRNCH


WHERE DO YOU PEOPLE GET OFF?!
I HAVE HAD IT...
...WITH ALL YOUR CRAP!
WE FINALLY HAVE A WAY TO FIGHT BACK AGAINST OUR STUPID FATE...
...AND YOU GOTTA STOMP ALL OVER IT, TILL THERE ISN'T A TRACE OF HOPE LEFT!

I CAN'T GO ON BY MYSELF. I DON'T KNOW HOW. I *NEED* YOU!

WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO...?
MASTER...
MASTER HIEHART...


IS HE GONNA BE ALL RIGHT...?
ARE YA HURT, LASS? IT DIDN'T BITE YA, DID IT?

DON'T ANY OF YOU GET IT?!
THIS IS FOR DAGDA! ALL I'M TRYIN' TO DO IS...!
...THIS WITCH THEY'RE WITH REALLY ONLY WANTS TO—
D'YA THINK HE'S IN PAIN? WANT ME TO HELP?
IS HE HURT BAD, MISS WITCH?
...
HUH...?
THEY'RE ...
WANT US TO HELP CARRY 'IM?
BRING 'IM OVER TO THE SHADOWS WHERE IT'S A LITTLE SAFER.
I MEAN... NOT REAL MAGIC. NOT LIKE OUR WITCH BUDDY USED, BUT STILL!
MY MOM TAUGHT ME A RHYME. PAIN, PAIN, GO AWAY. IT'S LIKE MAGIC!
DOES THAT MEAN MAYBE...
THEY SIMPLY HAPPENED TO BE SAVED IN A WAY THEY WEREN'T SUPPOSED TO BE.
THEY'RE JUST... PEOPLE.
ORDINARY PEOPLE.

YOU'RE JUST TRYING TO HELP!

...HE'S DONE TO *HELP* SOMEONE!
EVERYTHING CUSTAS HAS DONE...
ISN'T THAT RIGHT?!
TELL THEM, CUSTAS!
COCO ...?

CHAPTER 72 ♦ END

Witch Hat Atelier

Chapter 73

GET TO THE HEART OF HIS WORDS AND ACTIONS.
WHAT DOES HE YEARN FOR?
WHAT DOES HE HOPE TO PROVIDE?

PUR-POSE.

MAGIC IS DEFINED BY TECHNIQUE AS WELL AS IDEAS. BUT THERE'S ONE MORE CRUCIAL QUALITY.

WHAT DOES HE SEEK TO SECURE WHEN HE FASHIONS HIS SPELLS?
I KNOW WHAT CUSTAS IS AFTER. IT'S AS CLEAR AS DAY.

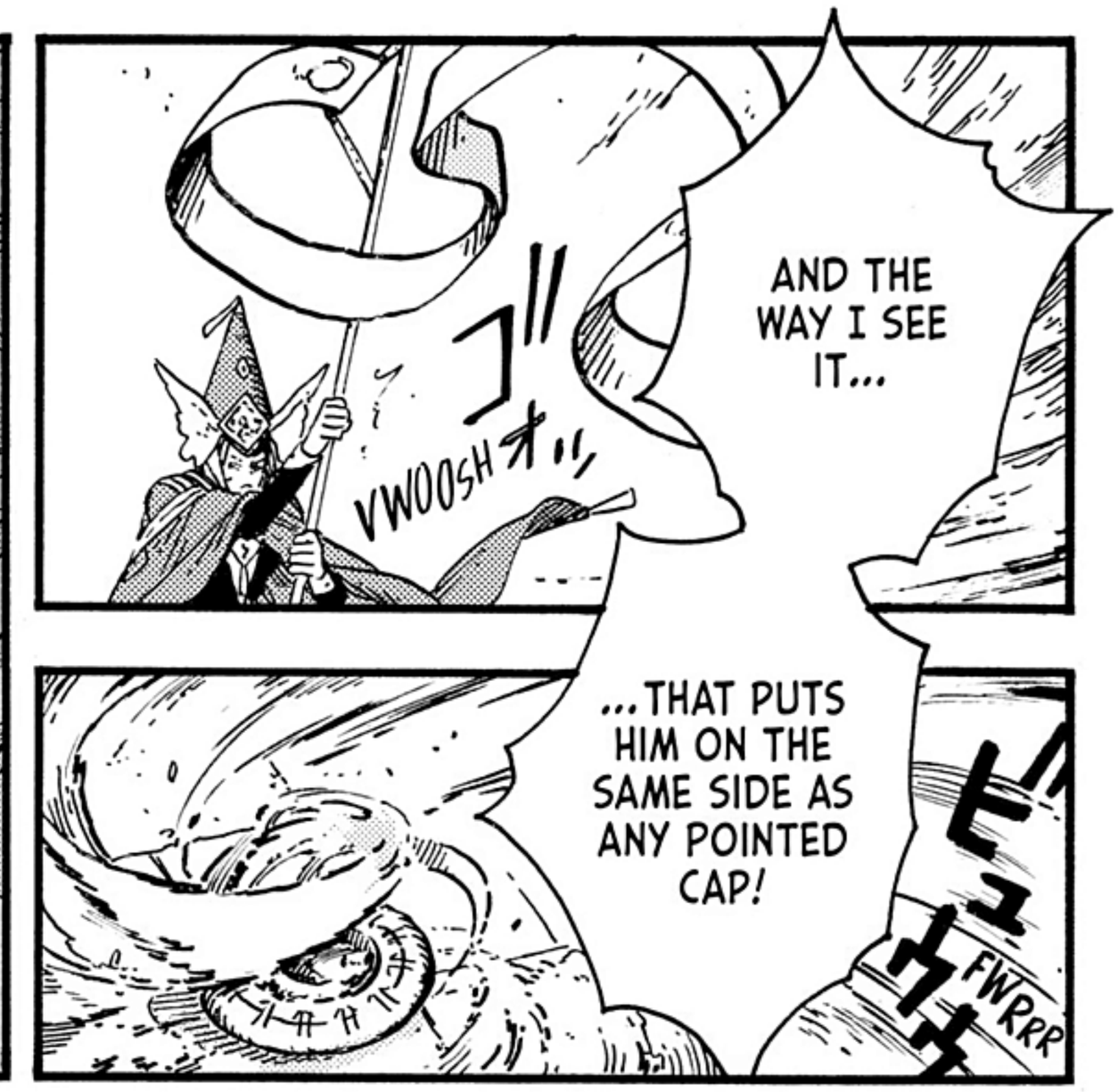
!!

MISS LULUCI!

THE SPELLS HE'S CASTING ...

CUSTAS IS TRYING TO SAVE THE LIFE OF SOMEONE HE CARES ABOUT!

...ARE MEANT TO HELP THAT MAN! TO HELP ALL OF THOSE PEOPLE!



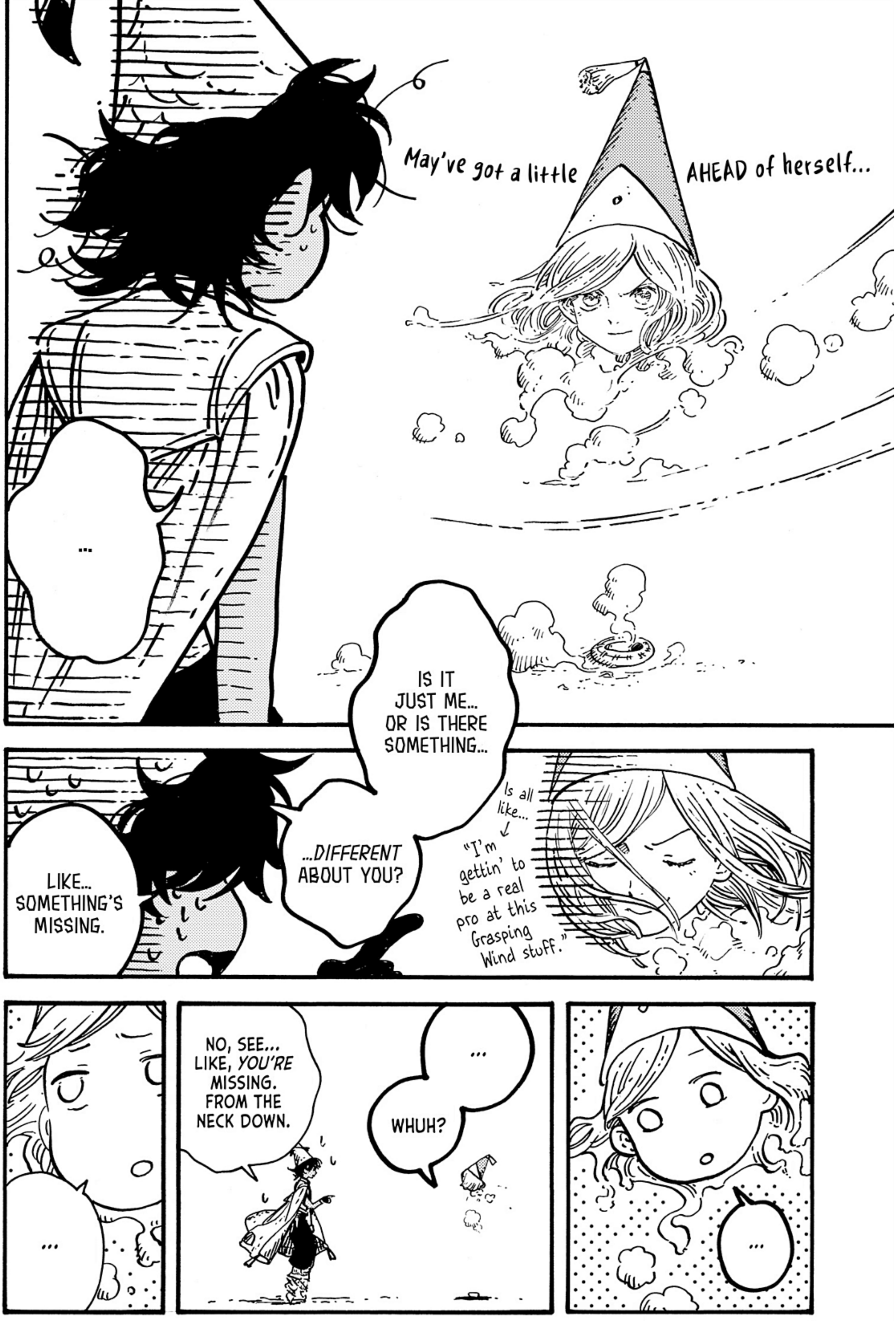
IF THE ONLY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HIM AND US IS ONE FEATHERED BRIM...

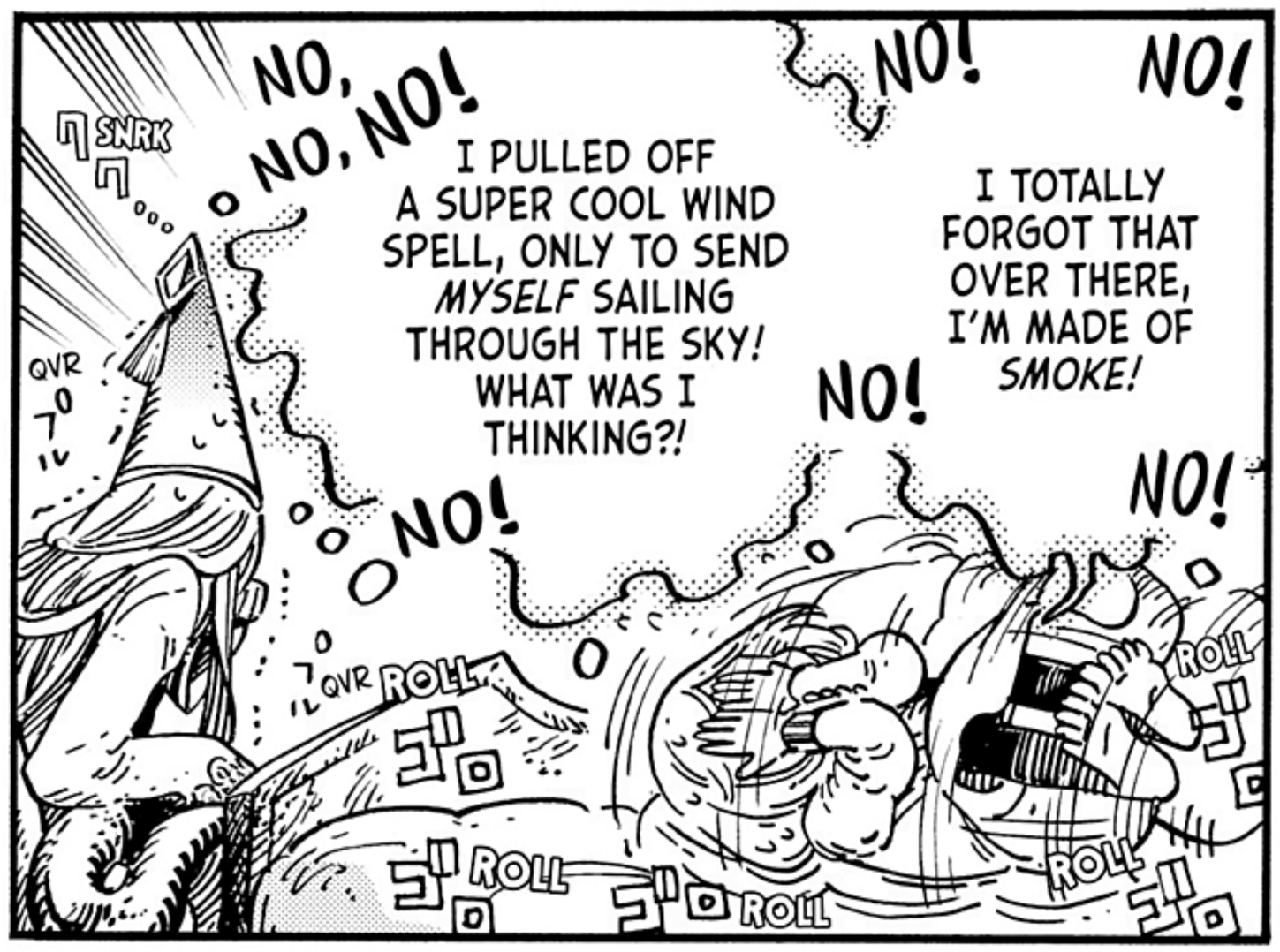
VWRSH

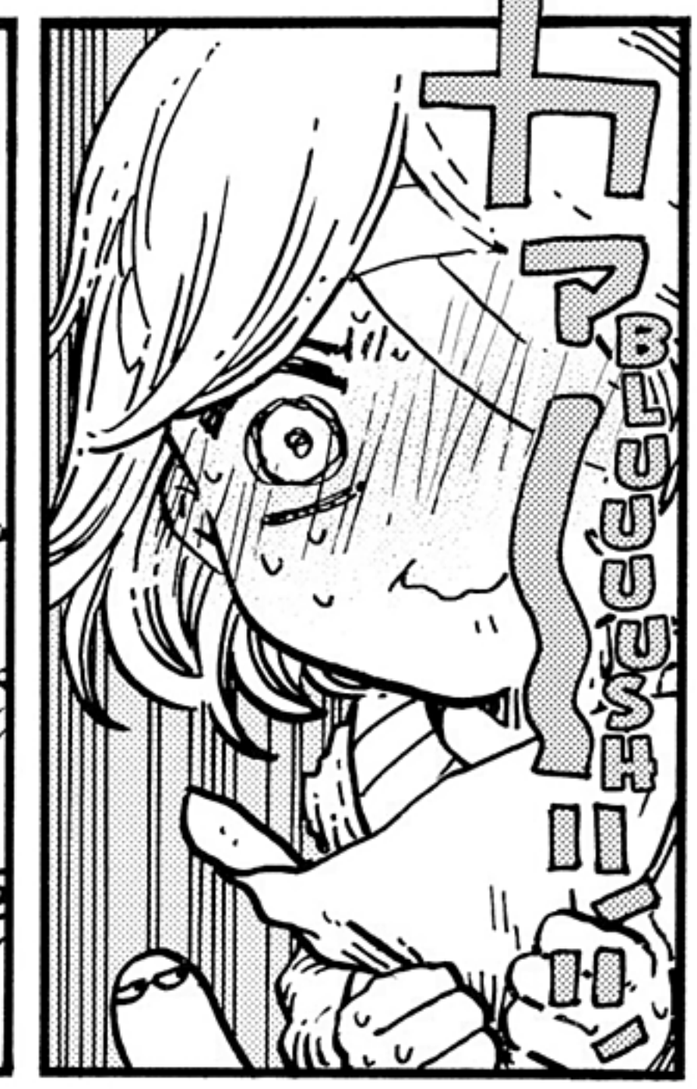
...THEN I'LL PLUCK IT OFF, HERE AND NOW!

PWA

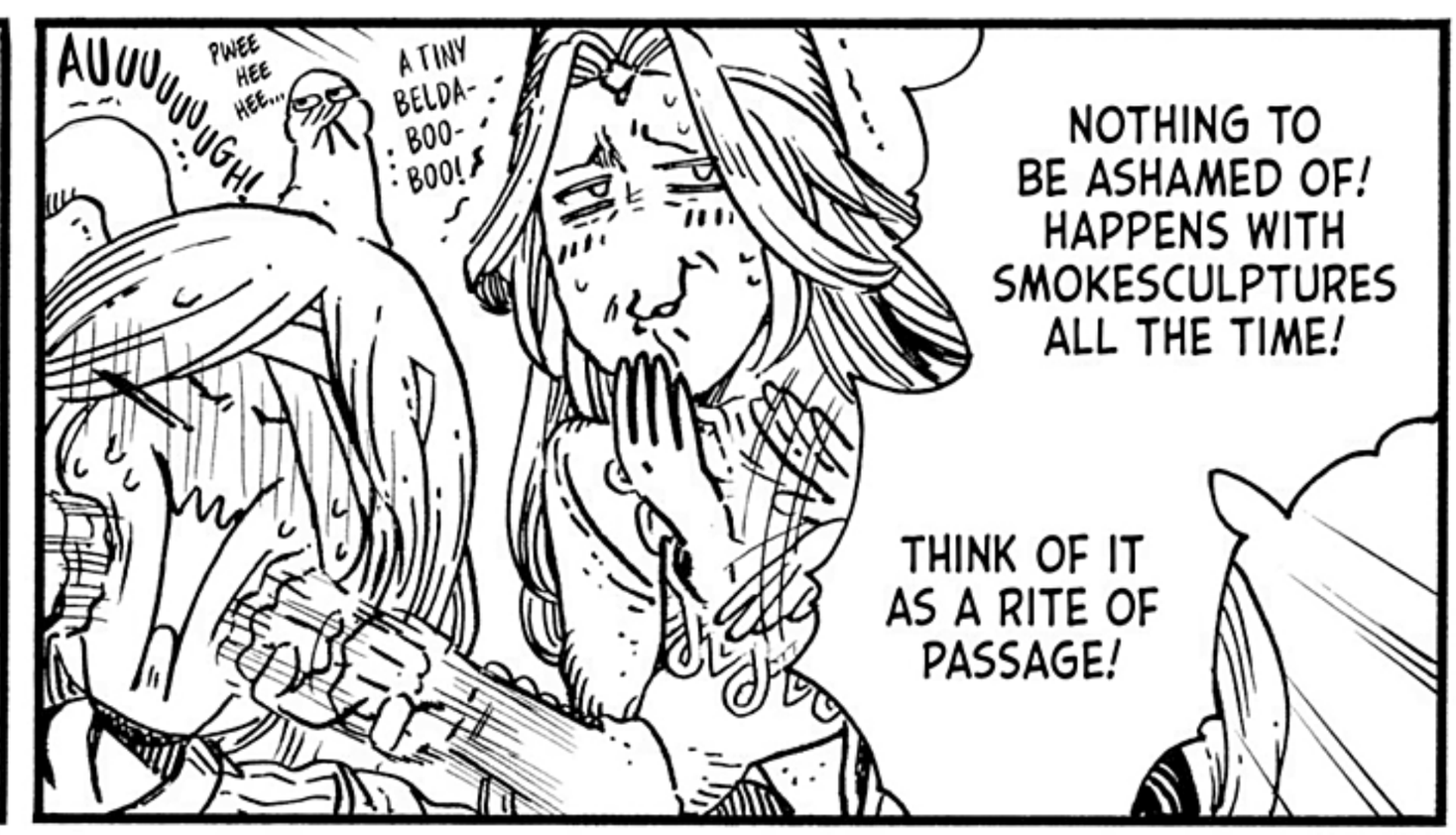
PWAFF


May've got a little AHEAD of herself...
...
IS IT JUST ME... OR IS THERE SOMETHING...
LIKE... SOMETHING'S MISSING.
...DIFFERENT ABOUT YOU?
Is all like...
"I'm gettin' to be a real pro at this Grasping Wind stuff."
...
NO, SEE... LIKE, YOU'RE MISSING. FROM THE NECK DOWN.
...
WHUH?
...


NO, NO, NO!
SNRK
I PULLED OFF A SUPER COOL WIND SPELL, ONLY TO SEND *MYSELF* SAILING THROUGH THE SKY! WHAT WAS I THINKING?!
NO!
QVR
ROLL
NO!
I TOTALLY FORGOT THAT OVER THERE, I'M MADE OF *SMOKE!*
NO!
NO!
ROLL
ROLL
ROLL
ROLL


BLUUSH

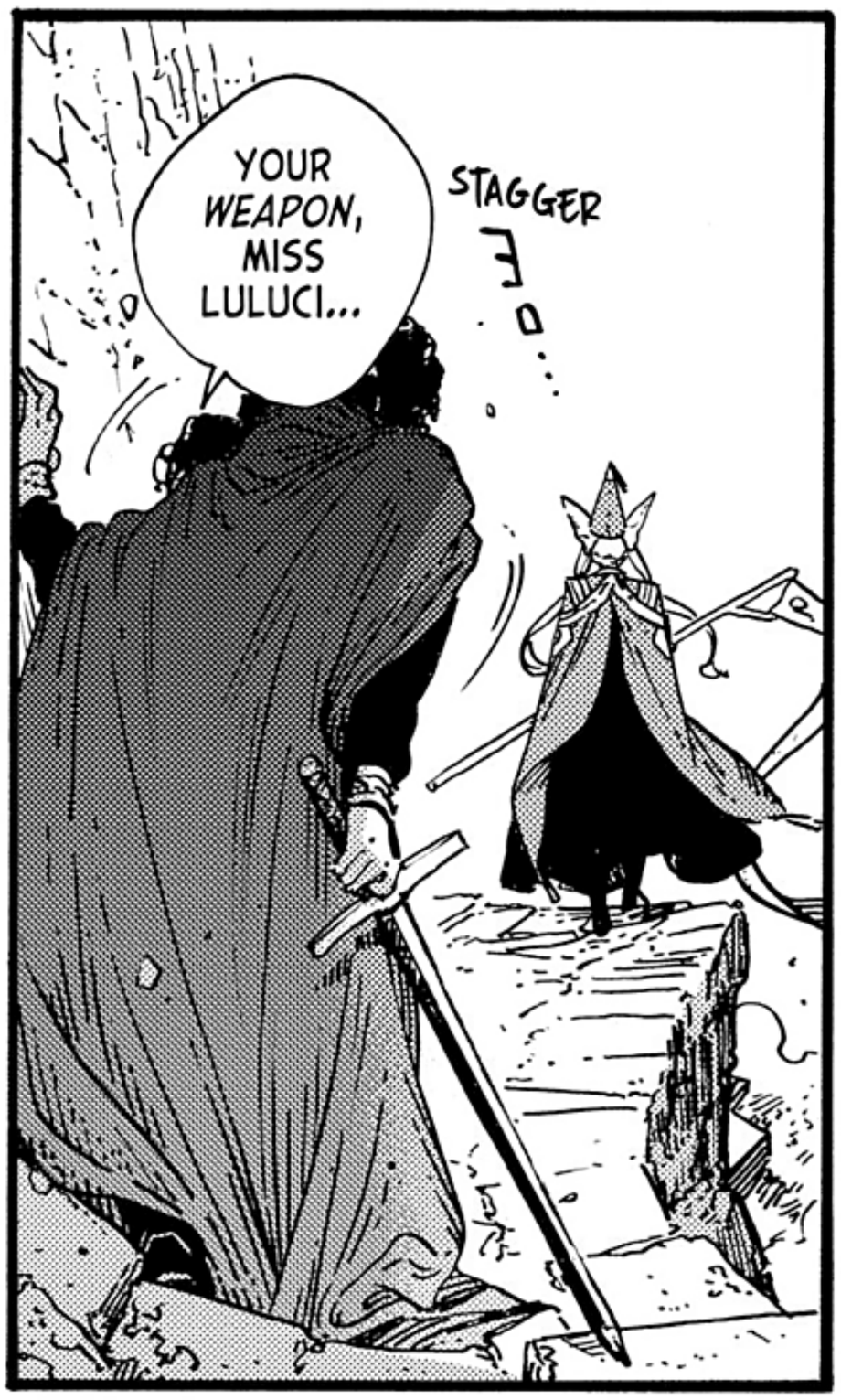
PFF...
Oh, hey! I'm coming back!
SLMP


AUUUUUUGH!
PWEE HEE HEE...
A TINY BELDA-BOO-BOO!
NOTHING TO BE ASHAMED OF! HAPPENS WITH SMOKESCULPTURES ALL THE TIME!
THINK OF IT AS A RITE OF PASSAGE!

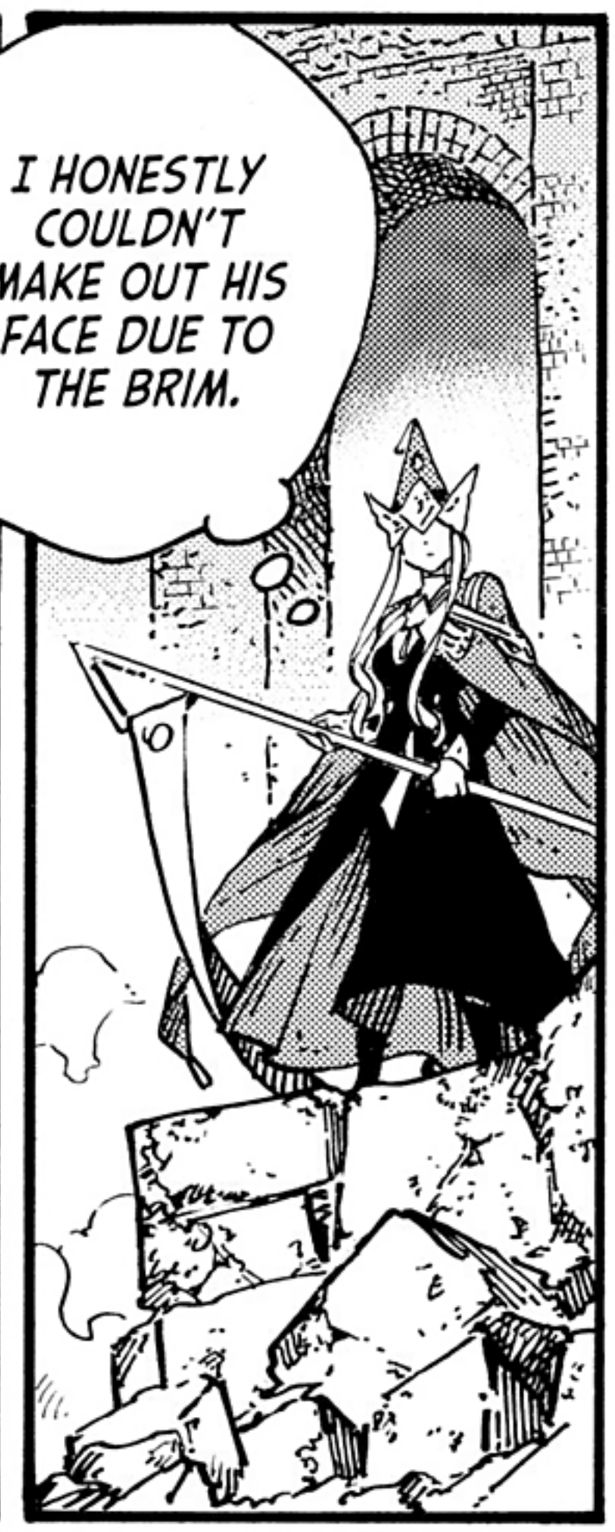
...AND YOU GOTTA GO PULLIN' ONE OF YOUR STUNTS.
I'M TRYIN' TO BE SERIOUS OVER HERE...

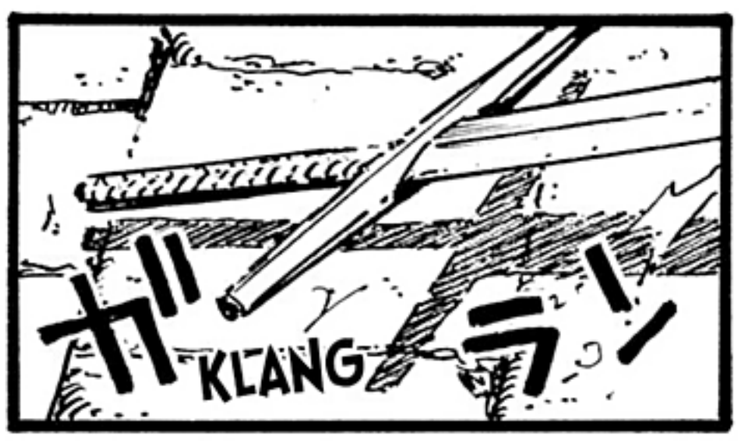
...IT AIN'T FAIR...

AT LEAST LEAVE ME MY *BRIM* SO THE REST OF THESE GUYS DON'T SEE ME LOOKIN' ALL *PATHETIC.*
HOW AM I S'POSED TO FIGHT...
...WHEN YOU'RE DOIN' DOPEY STUFF LIKE THAT?
CUT ME SOME SLACK, WILL YA?
...
IS HE... CRYING?

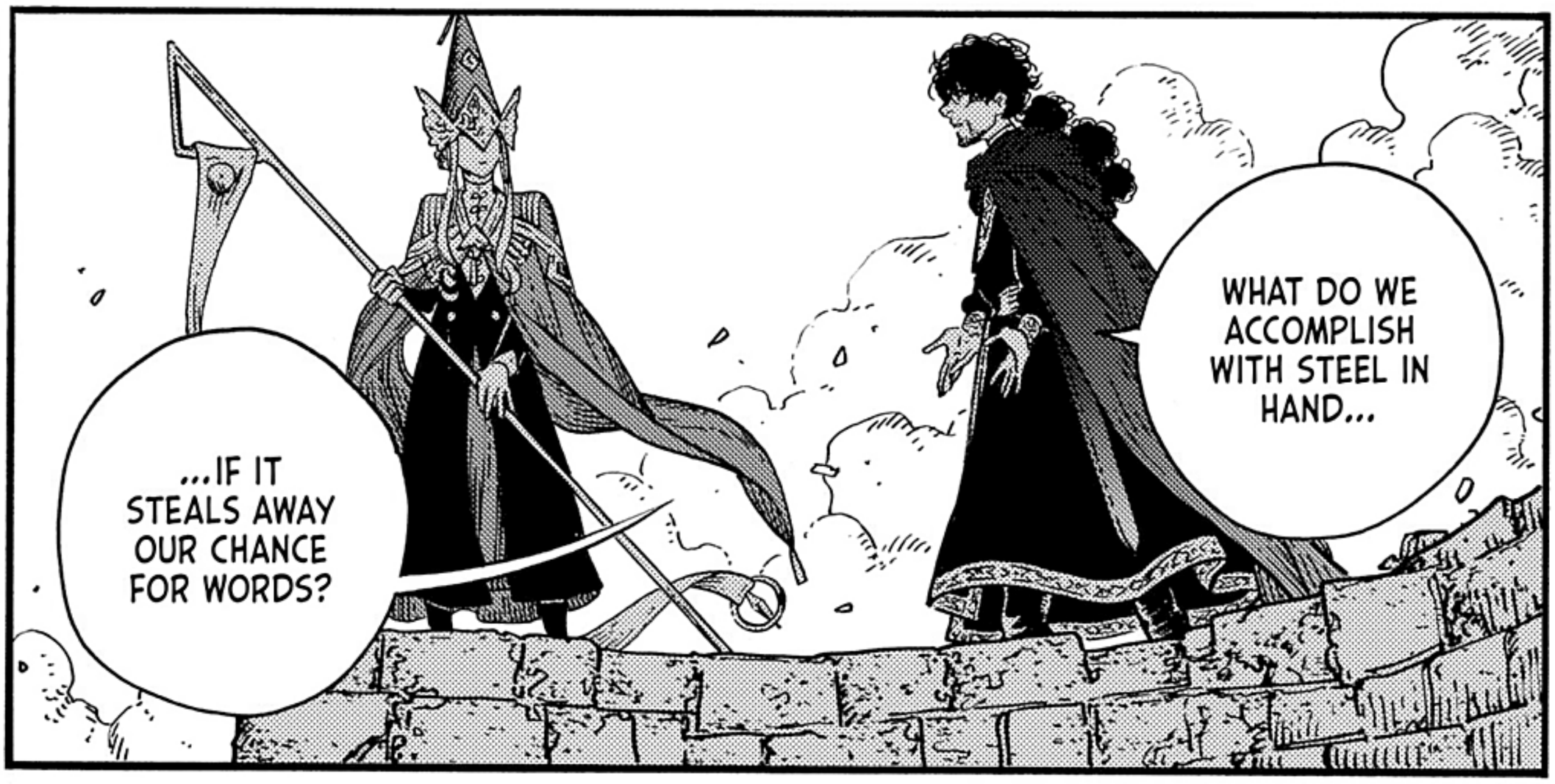

YOUR WEAPON, MISS LULUCI...
STAGGER

I WOULD HAVE NEVER IMAGINED HE WAS SO YOUNG.
HE'S LITTLE MORE THAN A SMALL, FRIGHTENED BOY.

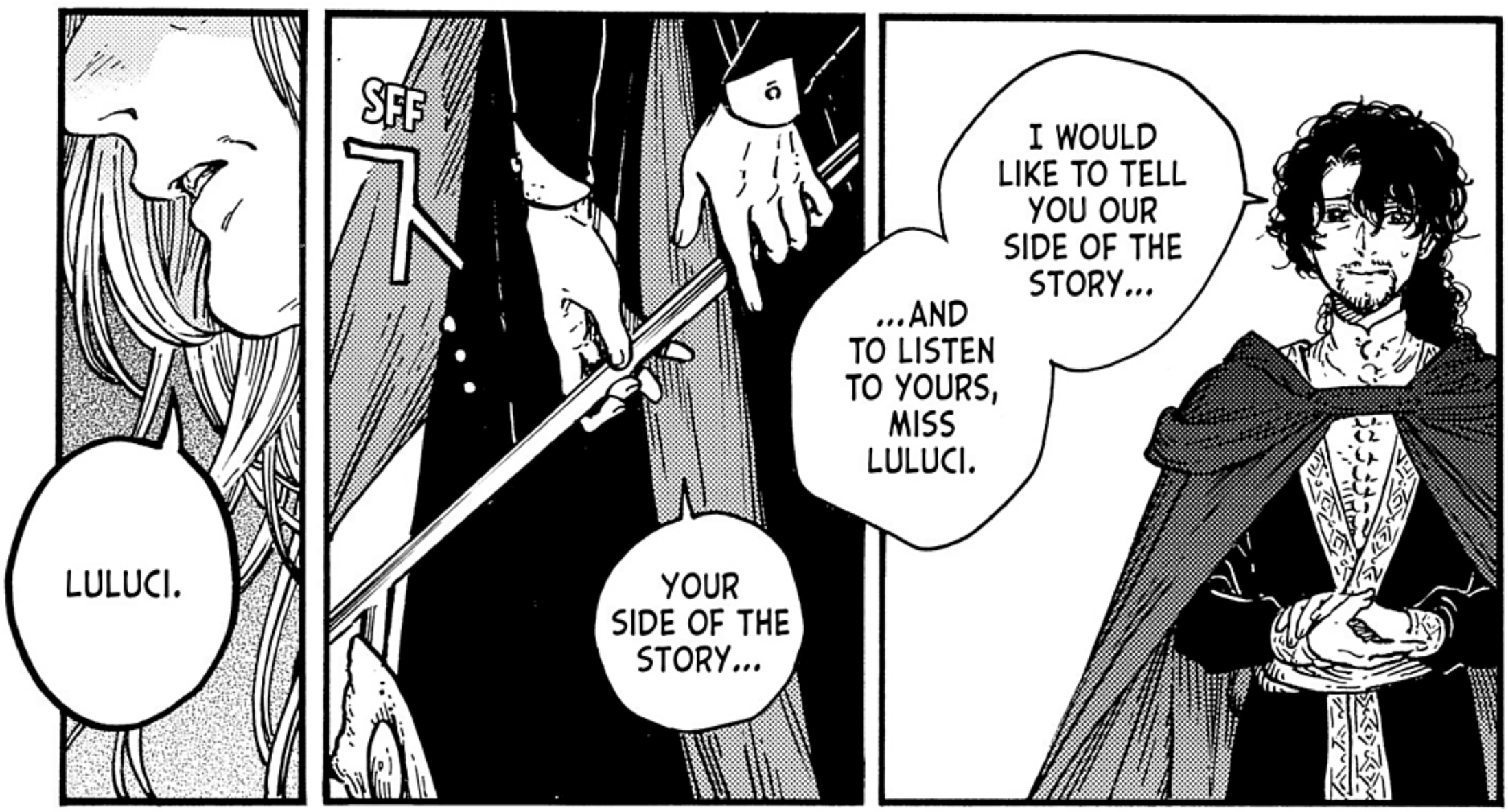

I HONESTLY COULDN'T MAKE OUT HIS FACE DUE TO THE BRIM.


KLANG

PLEASE. LAY IT DOWN, AS I LAY DOWN MINE.

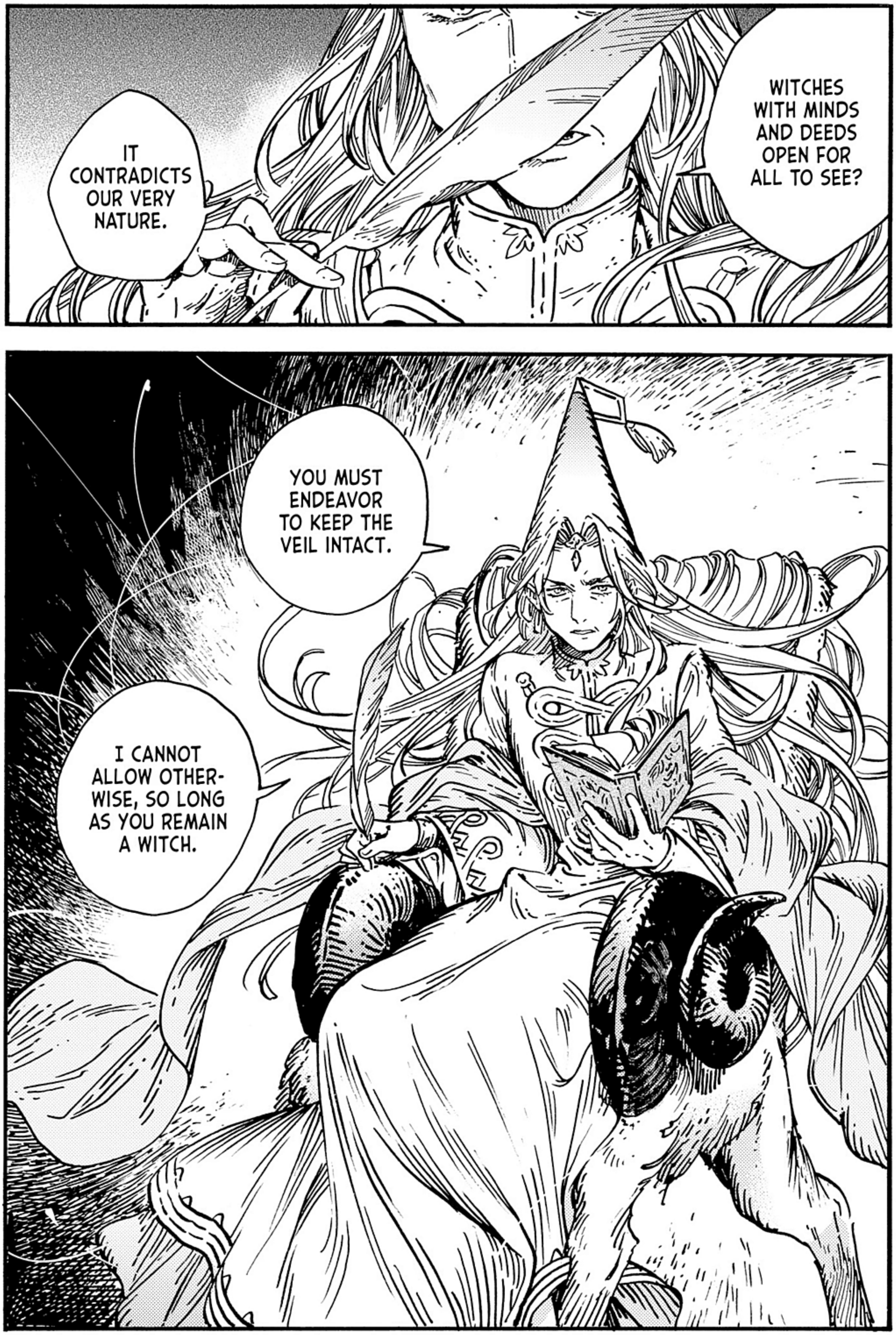

...IF IT STEALS AWAY OUR CHANCE FOR WORDS?
WHAT DO WE ACCOMPLISH WITH STEEL IN HAND...

...
HOW ELSE MAY WE LEARN THE TRUTH, IF WE DON'T LISTEN?
LET US NOT RUSH TO JUDGMENT OR IGNORE EACH OTHER'S PLEAS TO BE HEARD.

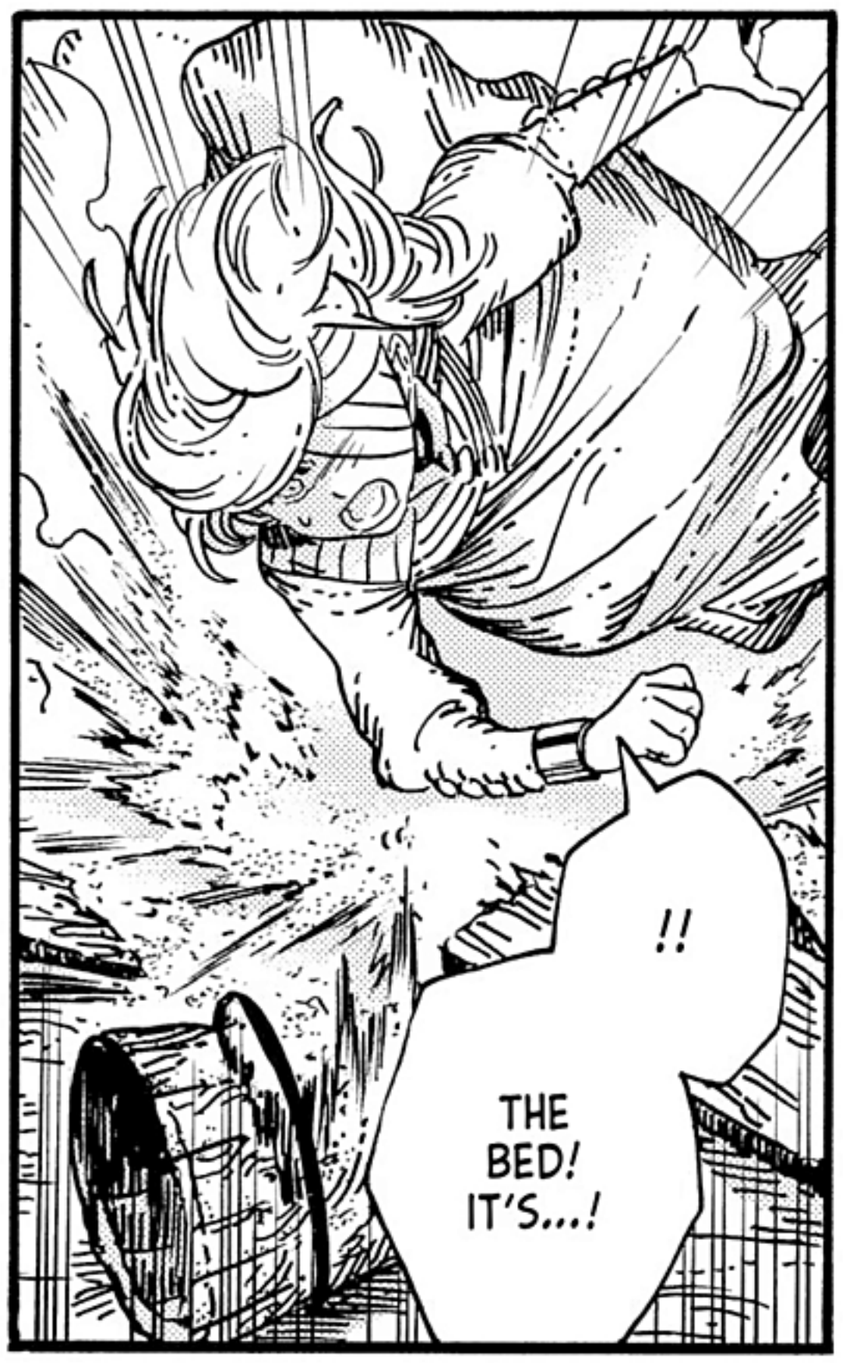

LULUCI.
SFF
YOUR SIDE OF THE STORY...
...AND TO LISTEN TO YOURS, MISS LULUCI.
I WOULD LIKE TO TELL YOU OUR SIDE OF THE STORY...

APPREHEND THEM ALL.

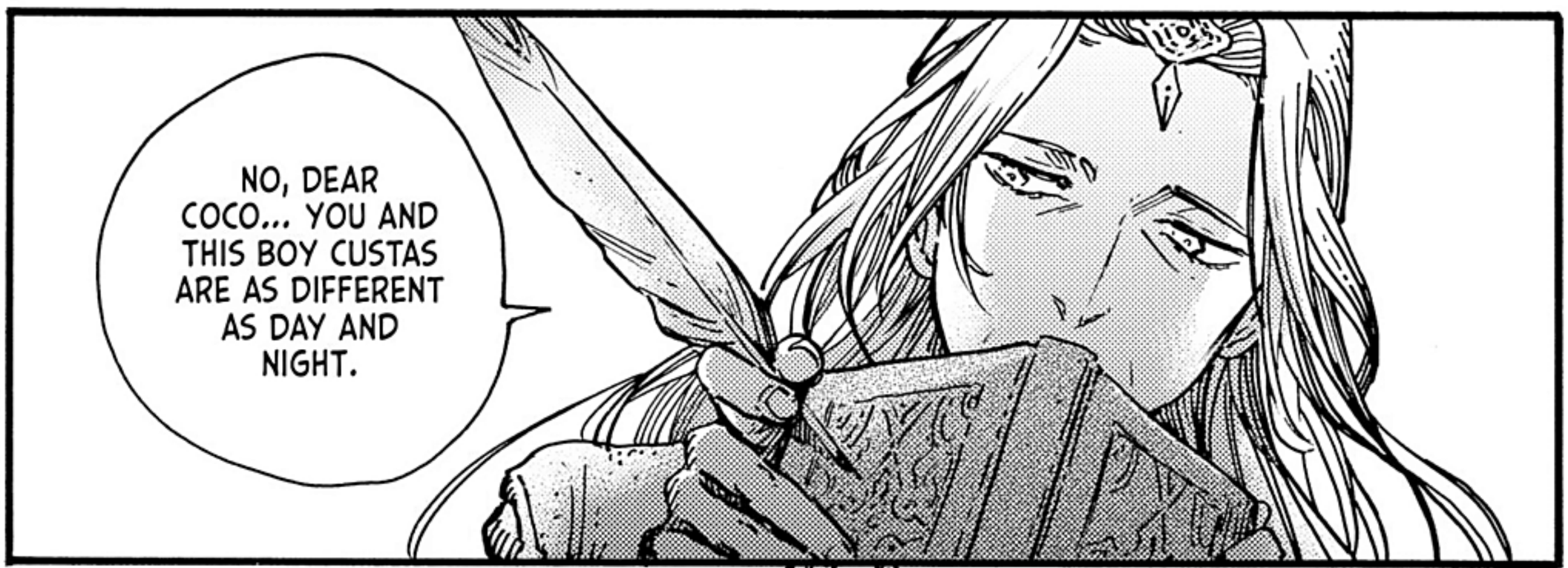
NO ONE CAN BE ALLOWED TO GO FREE.

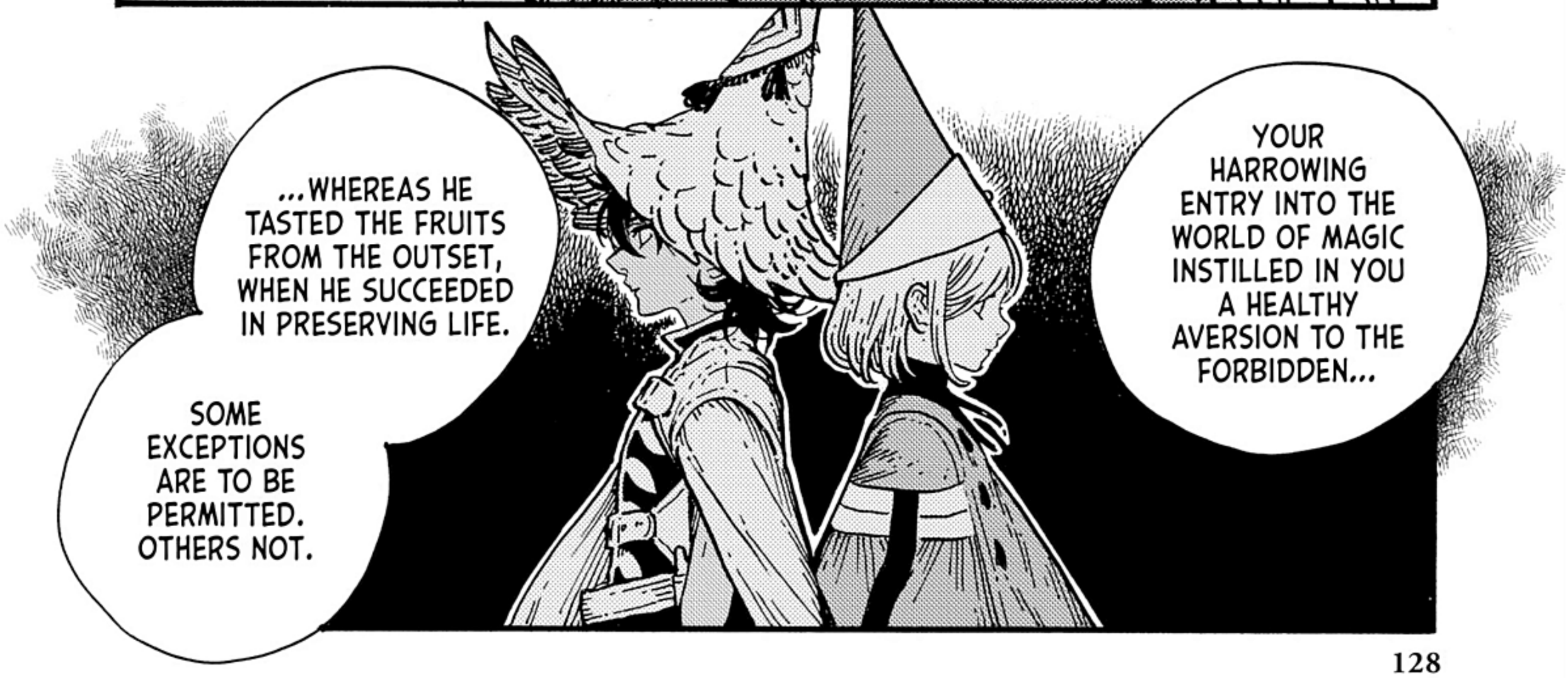

IT CONTRADICTS OUR VERY NATURE.
WITCHES WITH MINDS AND DEEDS OPEN FOR ALL TO SEE?
YOU MUST ENDEAVOR TO KEEP THE VEIL INTACT.
I CANNOT ALLOW OTHER-WISE, SO LONG AS YOU REMAIN A WITCH.

FRSH
SWK
SHWRRR
I THOUGHT I COULD COUNT ON YOU TO FORGIVE AND PROTECT CUSTAS, LIKE YOU DID FOR ME!
I BELIEVED IN YOU, LORD BELDARUIT!
YOU'RE VERY RESOURCEFUL, APPRENTICE OF MY APPRENTICE.
...WHILE MAINTAINING THE *APPEARANCE* THAT YOU WERE BUSY PERFECTING YOUR NEW SMOKE-SCULPTURE.
HMPH. YET FOR ALL THAT TRUST, YOU READIED SPELLS FOR JUST THIS OCCASION...

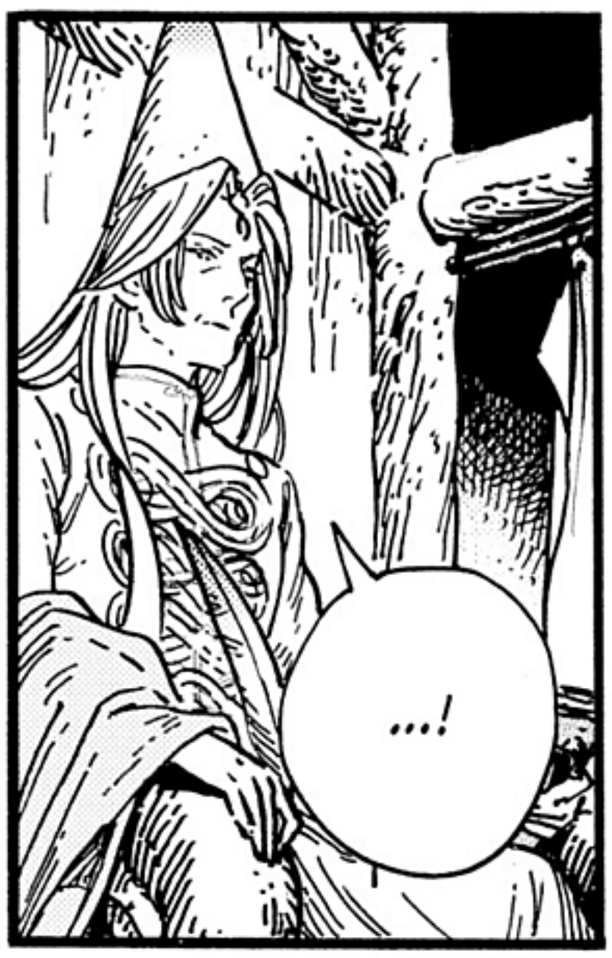

!!
THE BED! IT'S...!

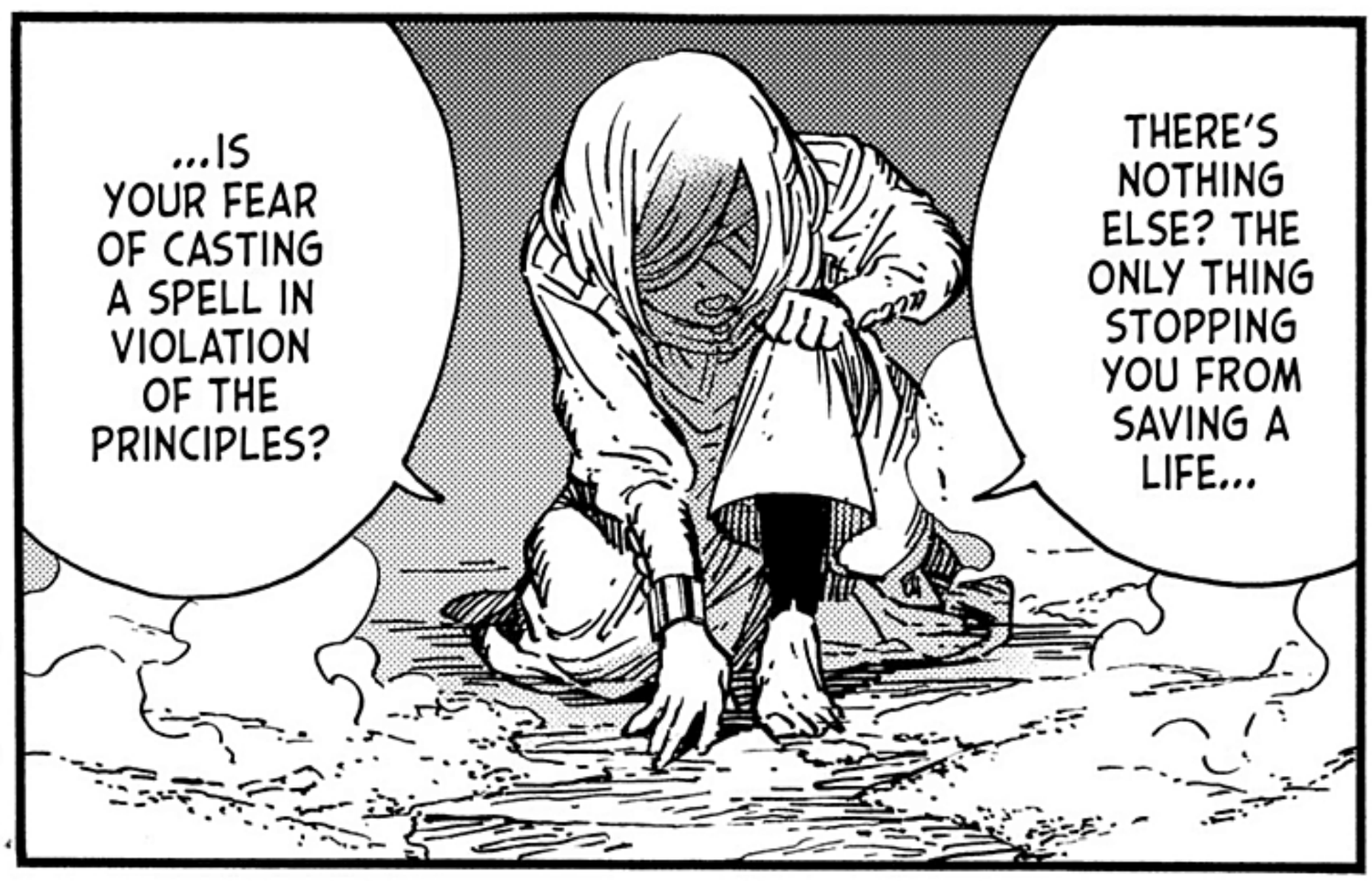
I'D EXPECT NOTHING LESS FROM A WITCH IN QIFREY'S CARE.
ZHHF

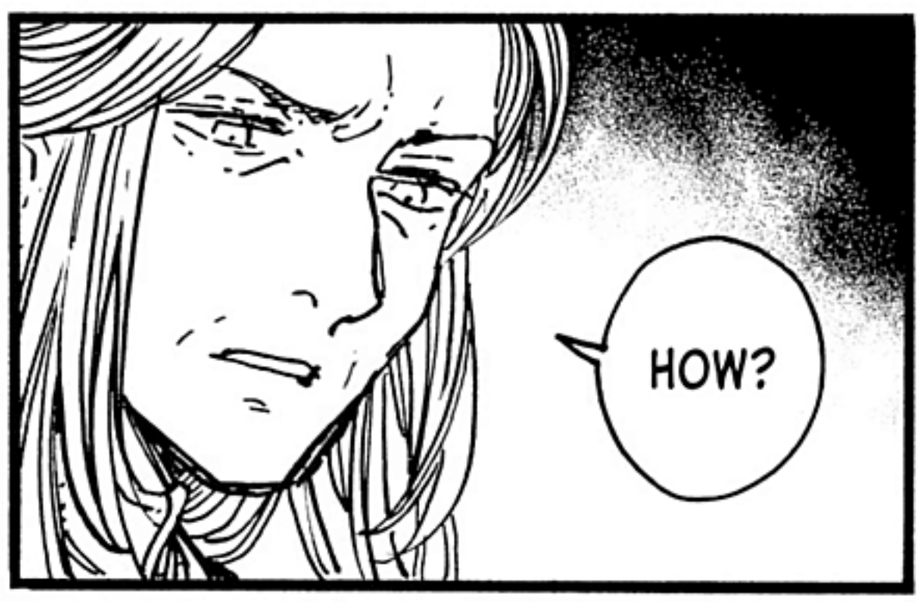

NO, DEAR COCO... YOU AND THIS BOY CUSTAS ARE AS DIFFERENT AS DAY AND NIGHT.


...WHEREAS HE TASTED THE FRUITS FROM THE OUTSET, WHEN HE SUCCEEDED IN PRESERVING LIFE.
SOME EXCEPTIONS ARE TO BE PERMITTED. OTHERS NOT.
YOUR HARROWING ENTRY INTO THE WORLD OF MAGIC INSTILLED IN YOU A HEALTHY AVERSION TO THE FORBIDDEN...

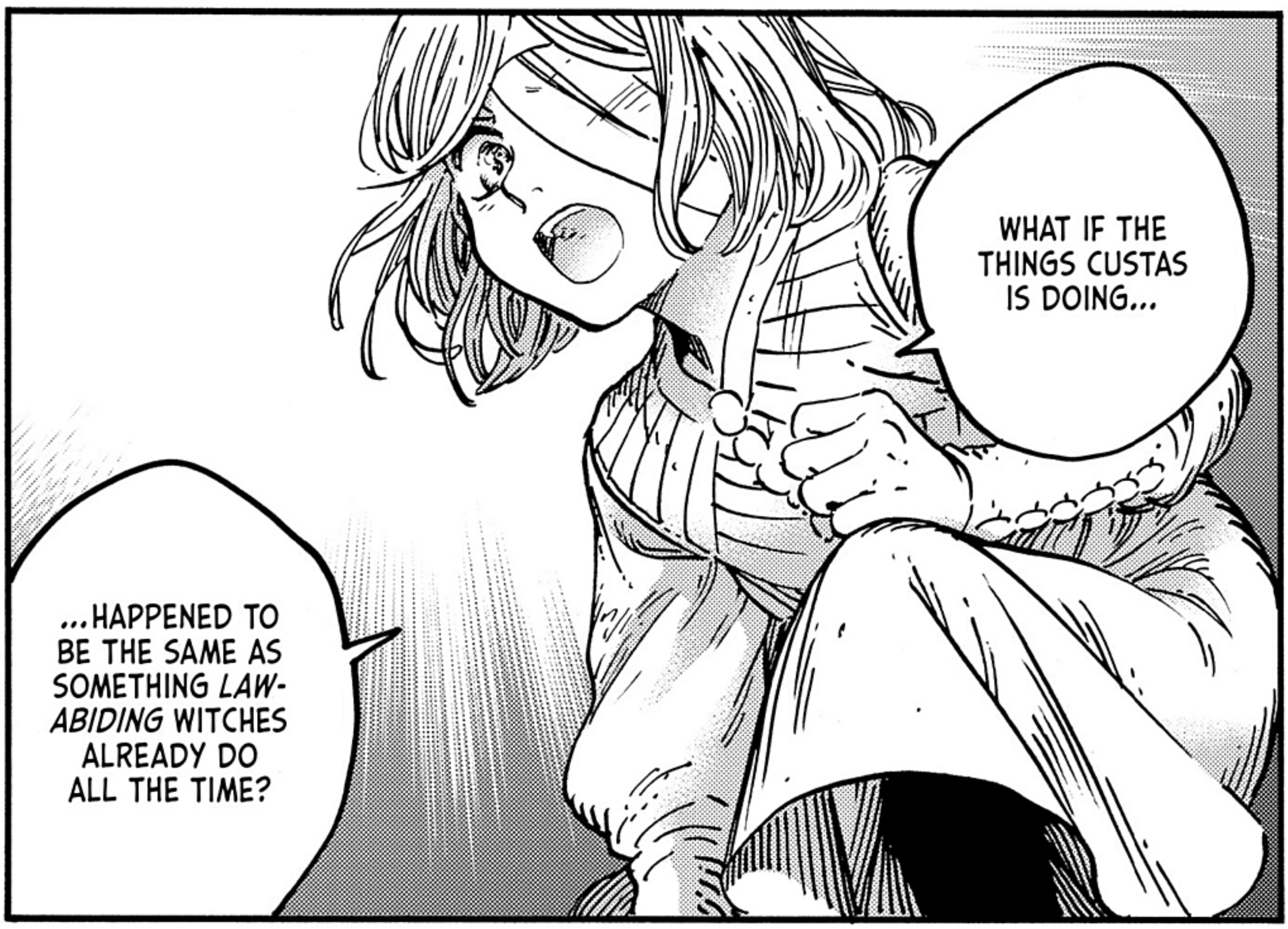
I DO THIS THAT WE MIGHT NEVER BEAR WITNESS TO ANOTHER DAY OF THE PACT.
IF A FEW SMALL SACRIFICES MUST BE MADE TO ENSURE IT SO—
THAT'S YOUR REASON?
NOW THAT HE KNOWS, HE WILL NO LONGER HESITATE.
WORD OF HIS TRANSGRESSIONS WILL SPREAD, PROMPTING OTHERS TO TRY.
AND THAT, COCO, IS A PATH OUR KIND KNOWS TOO WELL.
LAST WE WALKED IT, MAGIC WAS NEARLY LOST TO ALL.

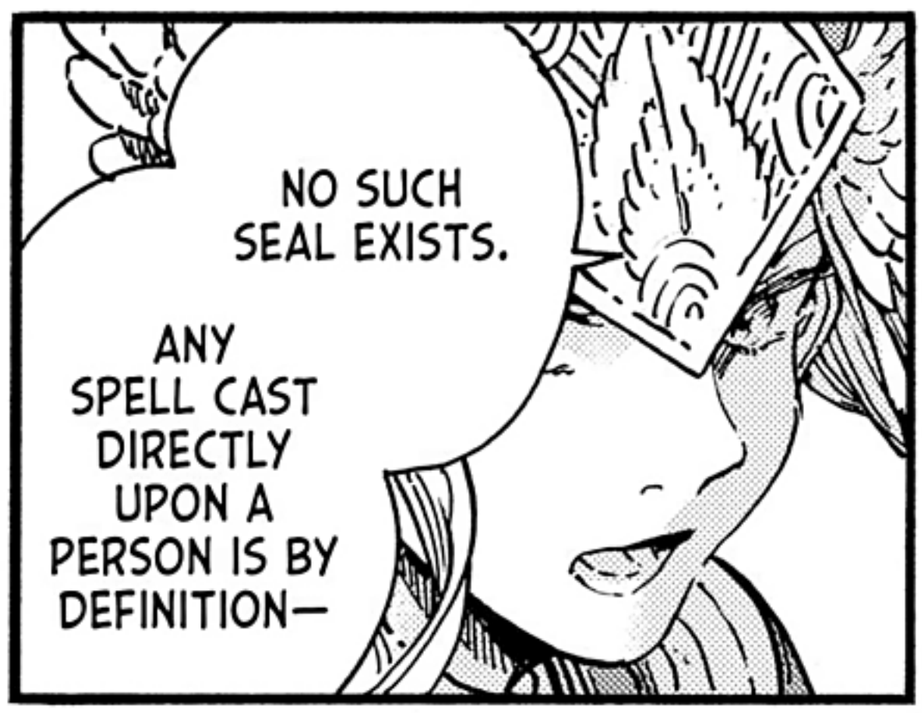

...!

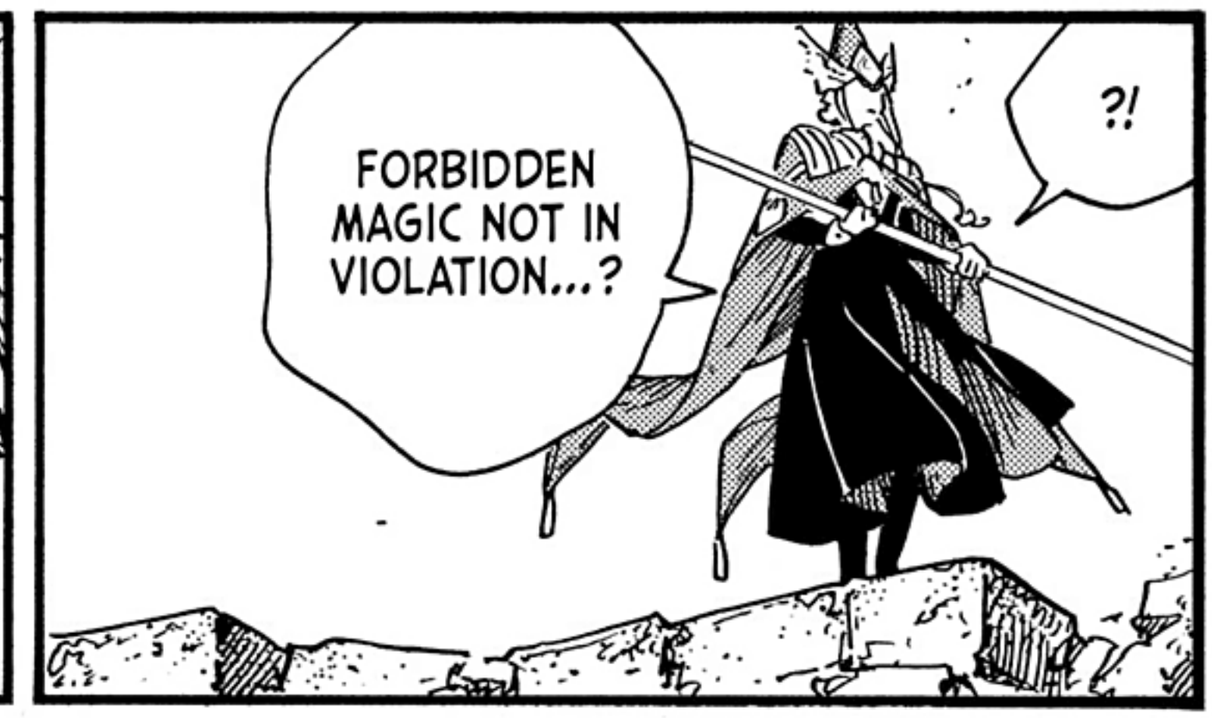

...IS YOUR FEAR OF CASTING A SPELL IN VIOLATION OF THE PRINCIPLES?
THERE'S NOTHING ELSE? THE ONLY THING STOPPING YOU FROM SAVING A LIFE...

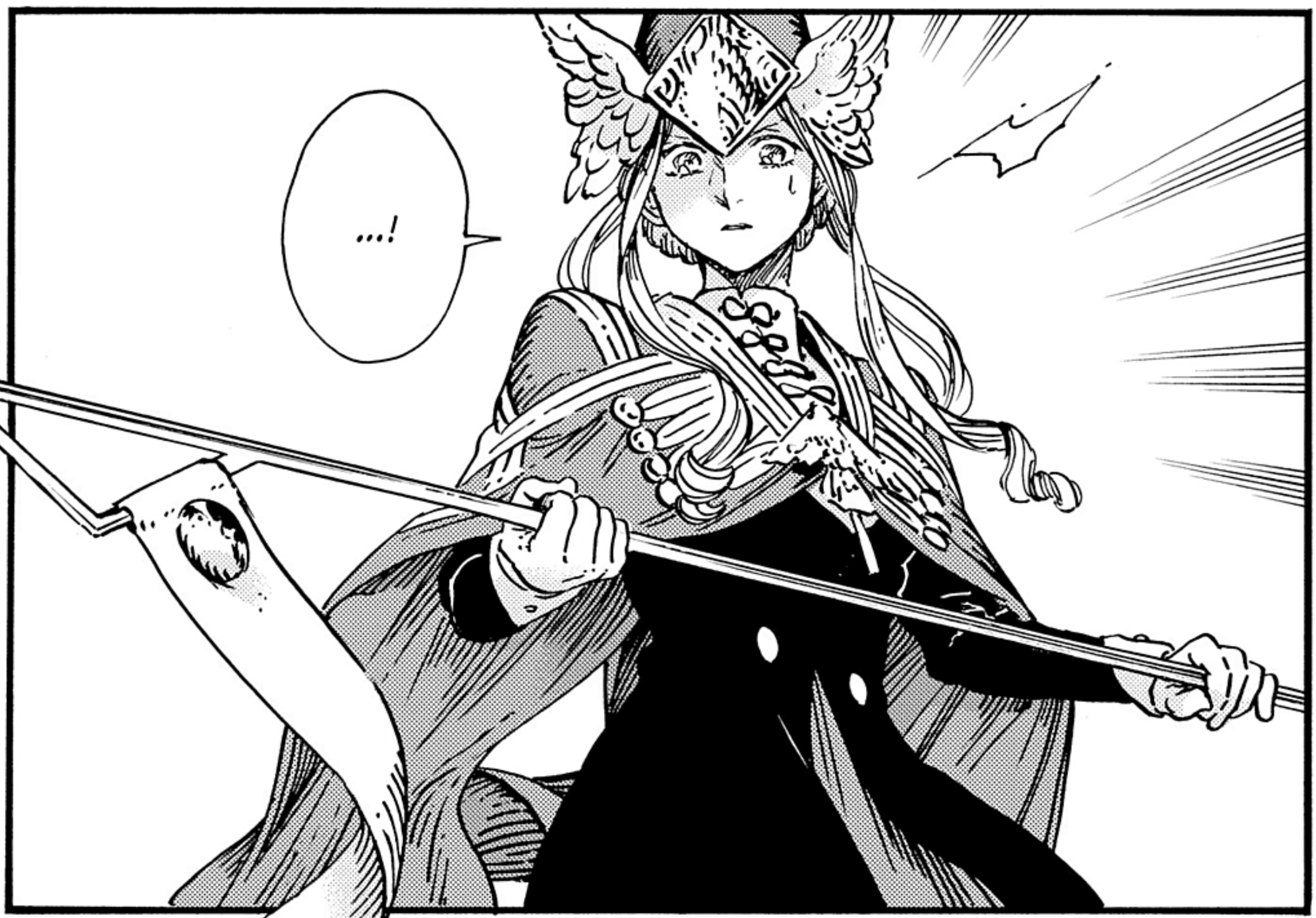

HOW?

!
THEN WHAT IF IT'S DONE *WITHOUT* BREAKING ANY RULES?


WHAT IF THE THINGS CUSTAS IS DOING...
...HAPPENED TO BE THE SAME AS SOMETHING *LAW-ABIDING* WITCHES ALREADY DO ALL THE TIME?


NO SUCH SEAL EXISTS.
ANY SPELL CAST DIRECTLY UPON A PERSON IS BY DEFINITION—


FORBIDDEN MAGIC NOT IN VIOLATION...?
?!

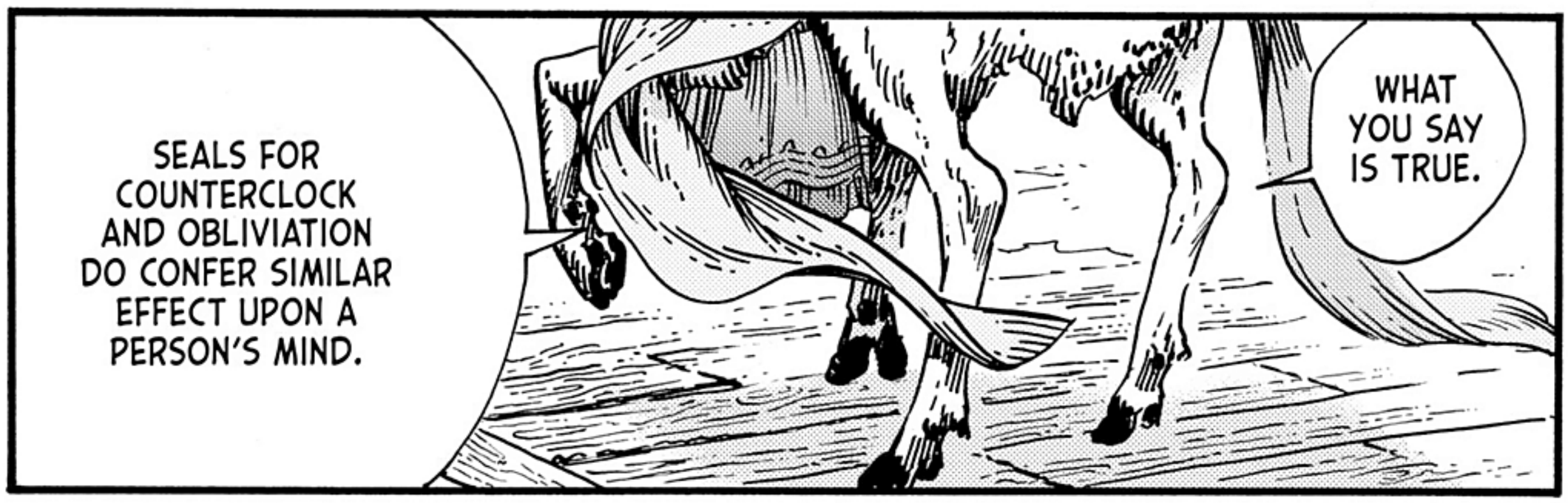

...!

THE ONE TO—
SHE'S TALKING ABOUT THE SEAL WE USE!
SAVE ONE EXCEPTION. A FORBIDDEN SPELL THOUGHT NOT TO BREAK THE PACT, BUT RATHER TO UPHOLD IT.

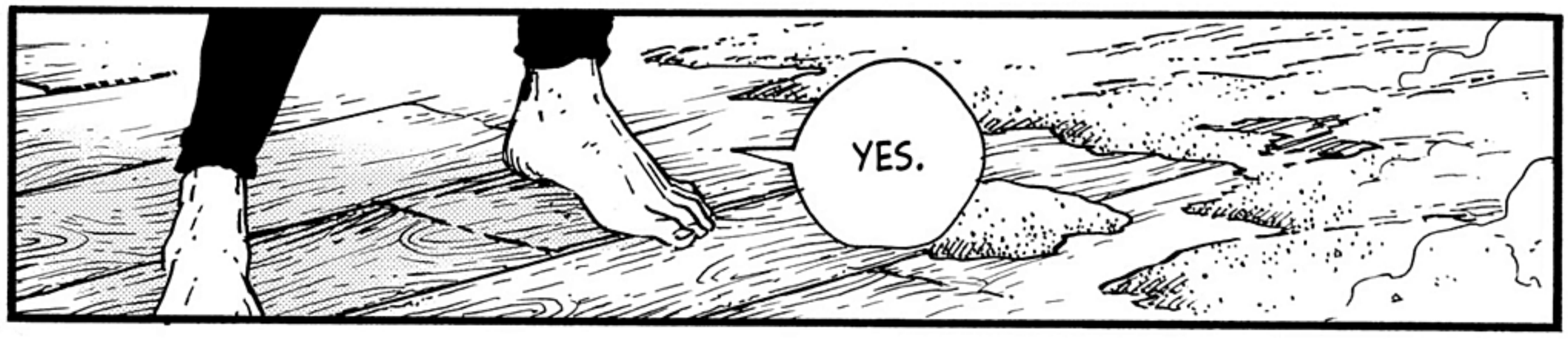
...IS JUST ANOTHER WAY TO ERASE *MEMORIES.*

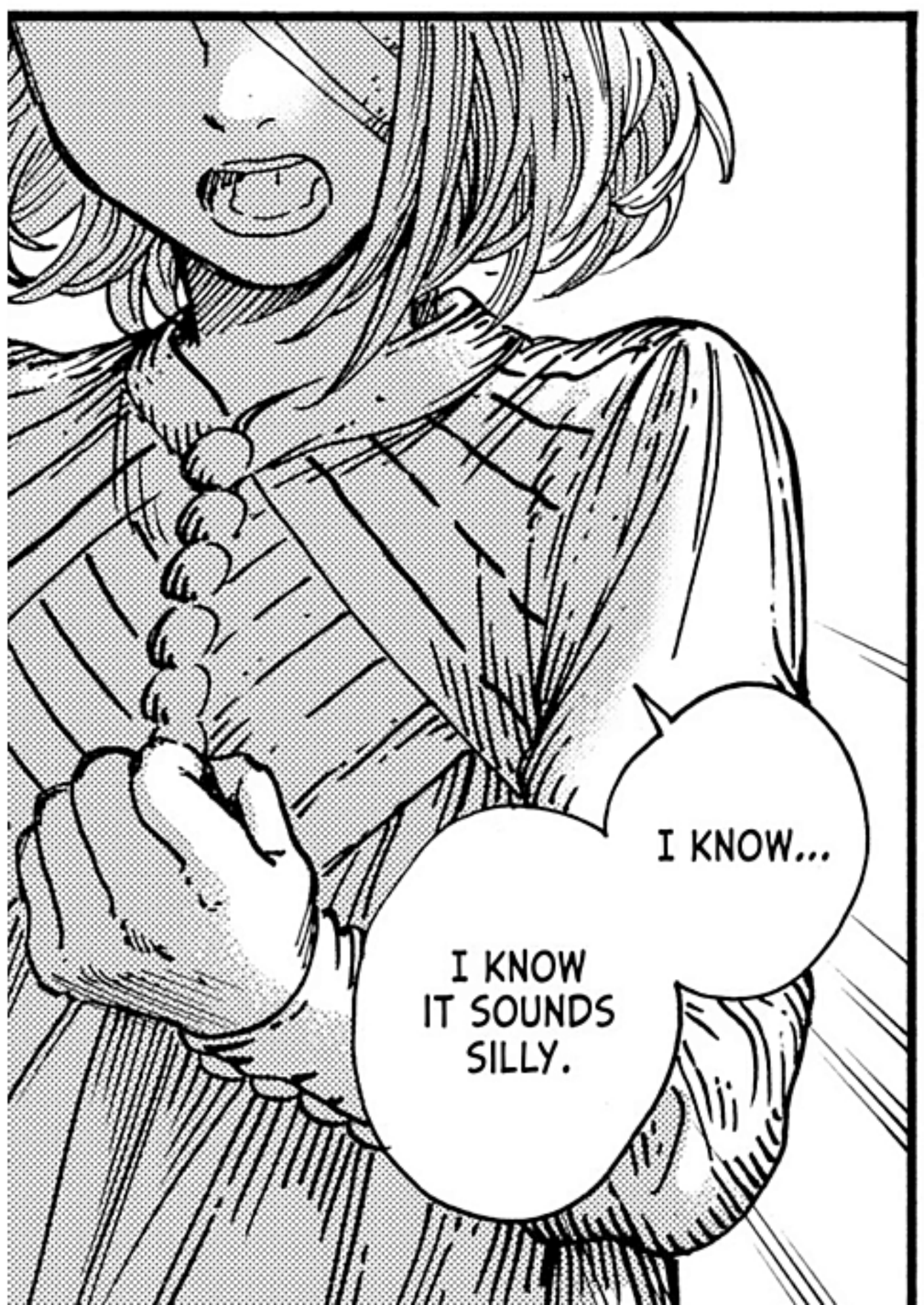
THAT'S RIGHT.

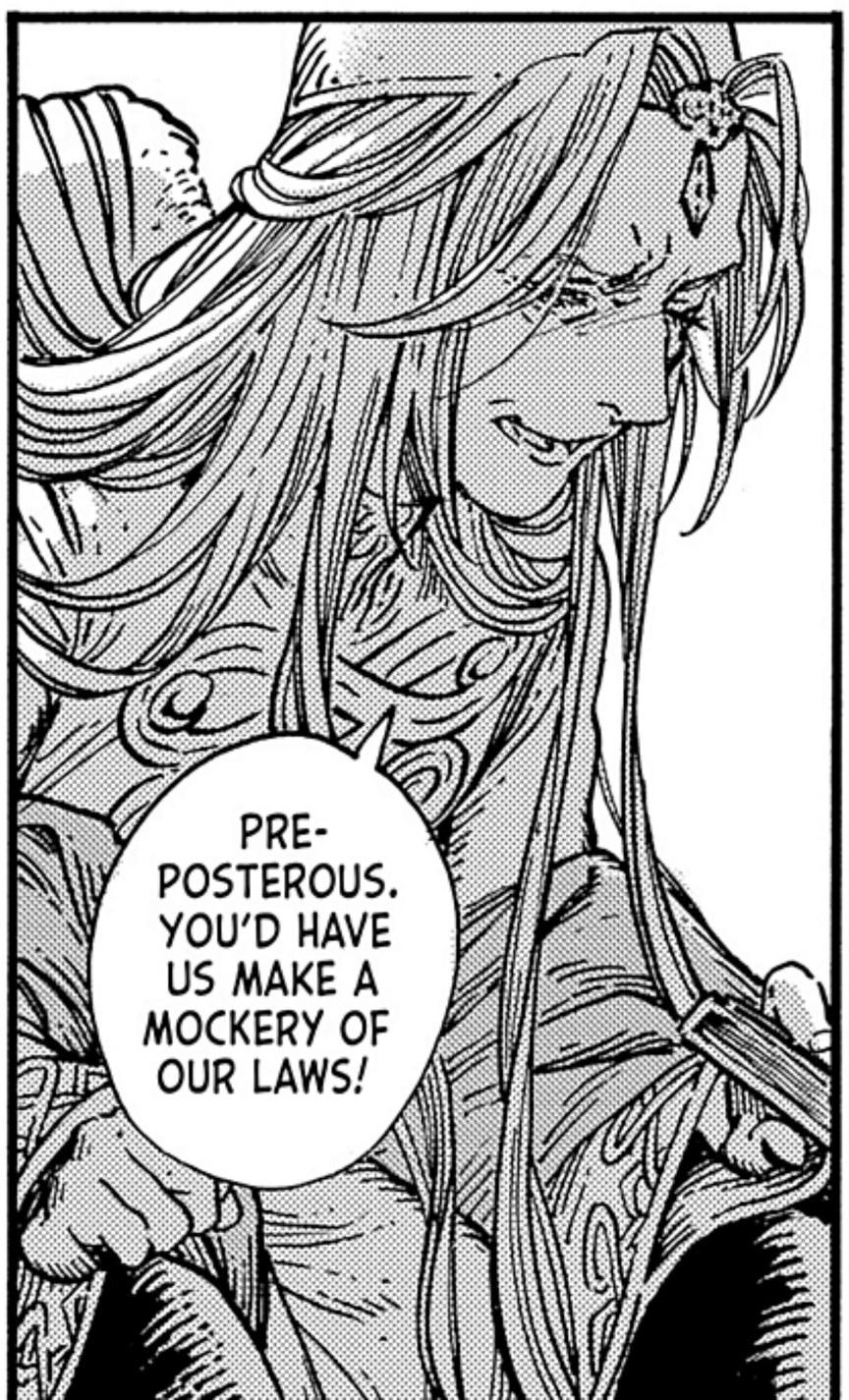
COUNTER-CLOCK MAGIC...


SEALS FOR COUNTERCLOCK AND OBLIVIATION DO CONFER SIMILAR EFFECT UPON A PERSON'S MIND.
WHAT YOU SAY IS TRUE.

CUSTAS' ACTIONS SHOULD BE ACCEPTED, BASED ON ONE SHALLOW RESEMBLANCE?
AND? IS THAT THE ENTIRETY OF YOUR SUGGESTION?


YES.


I KNOW...
I KNOW IT SOUNDS SILLY.


PRE-POSTEROUS. YOU'D HAVE US MAKE A MOCKERY OF OUR LAWS!

...

...IT'S MUCH MORE BECOMING OF A WITCH TO SEARCH FOR HOPE...
BUT IF YOU ASK ME...
...IN *EVERY* POSSIBILITY, NO MATTER HOW SILLY, INSTEAD OF SIMPLY GIVING UP!
I SEE, COCO...
"DO I... DOES EVERY WITCH HAVE NO OPTION BUT TO **GIVE UP**?"
"WHAT IF FORBIDDEN MAGIC IS THE **ONLY** CHOICE YOU HAVE?"

...

COCO...

THIS IS THE ANSWER YOU GRABBED HOLD OF...

...WHEN FACED WITH IMPOSSIBLE DILEMMA.

TMP

THAT SPELL YOU MENTIONED ...?

FWAH

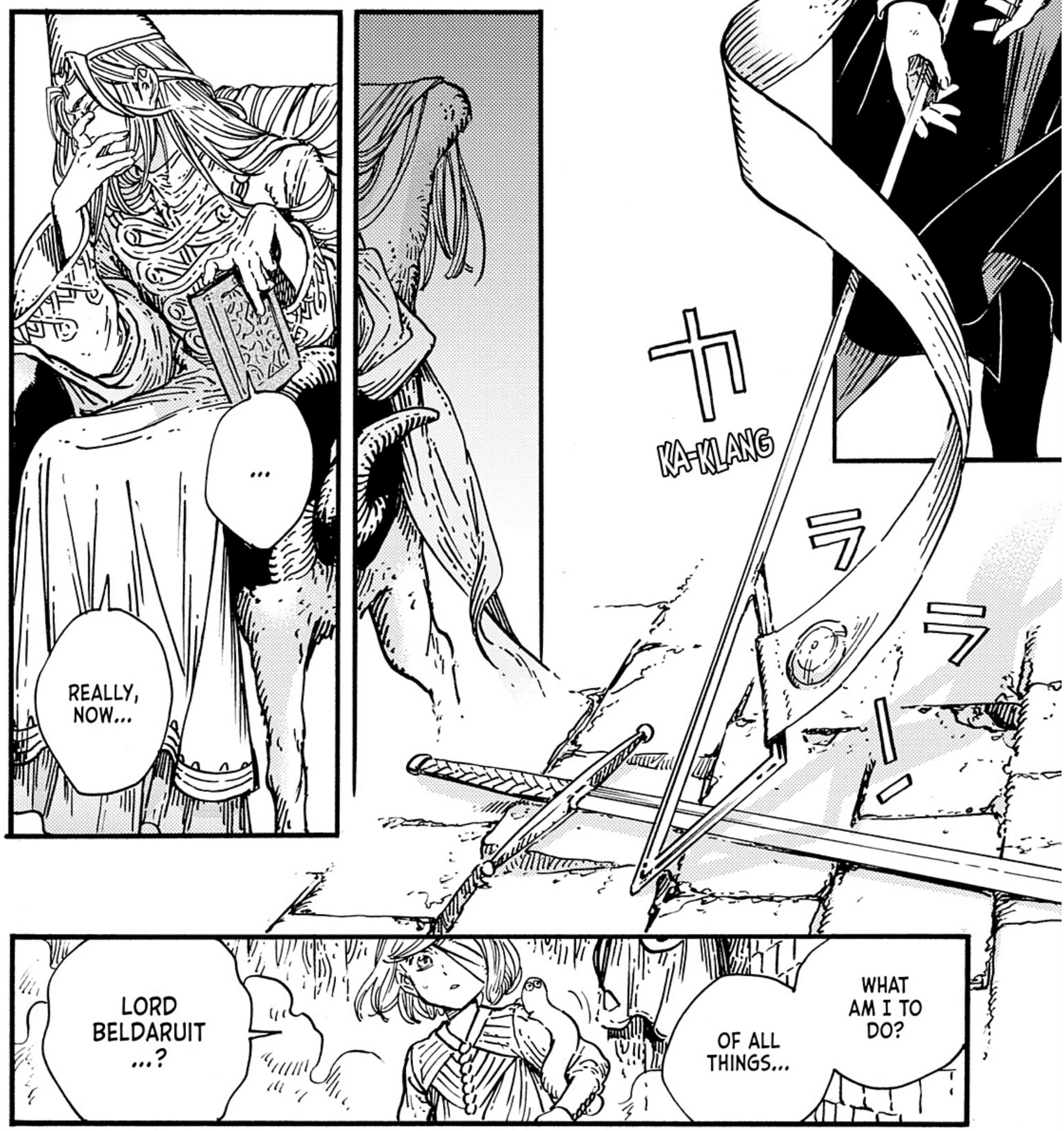
HEY!

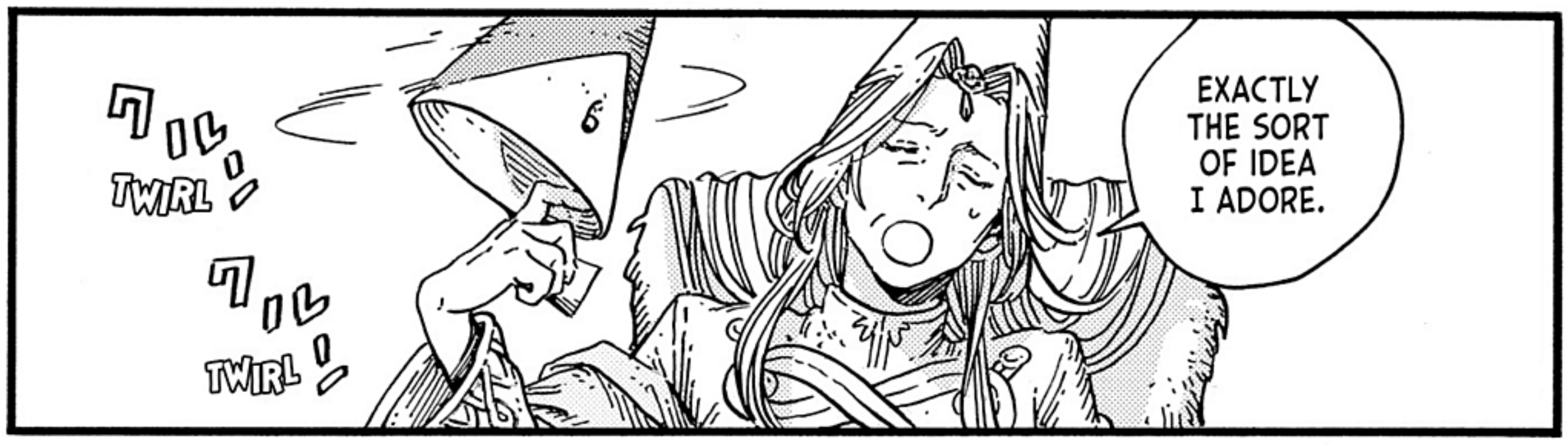
UM...!

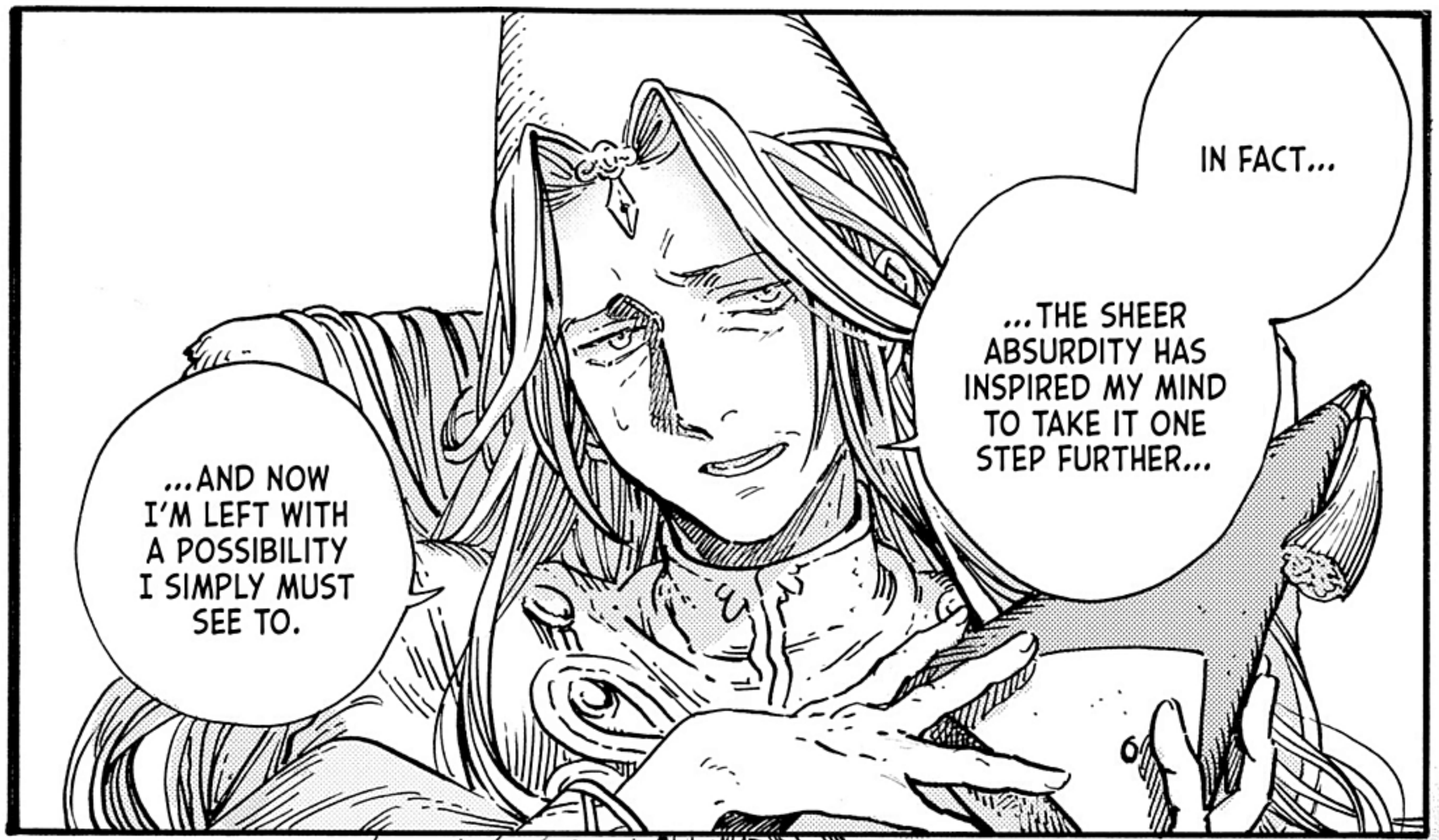
FWSH

HALT!

IN THE NAME OF THE ORDER—

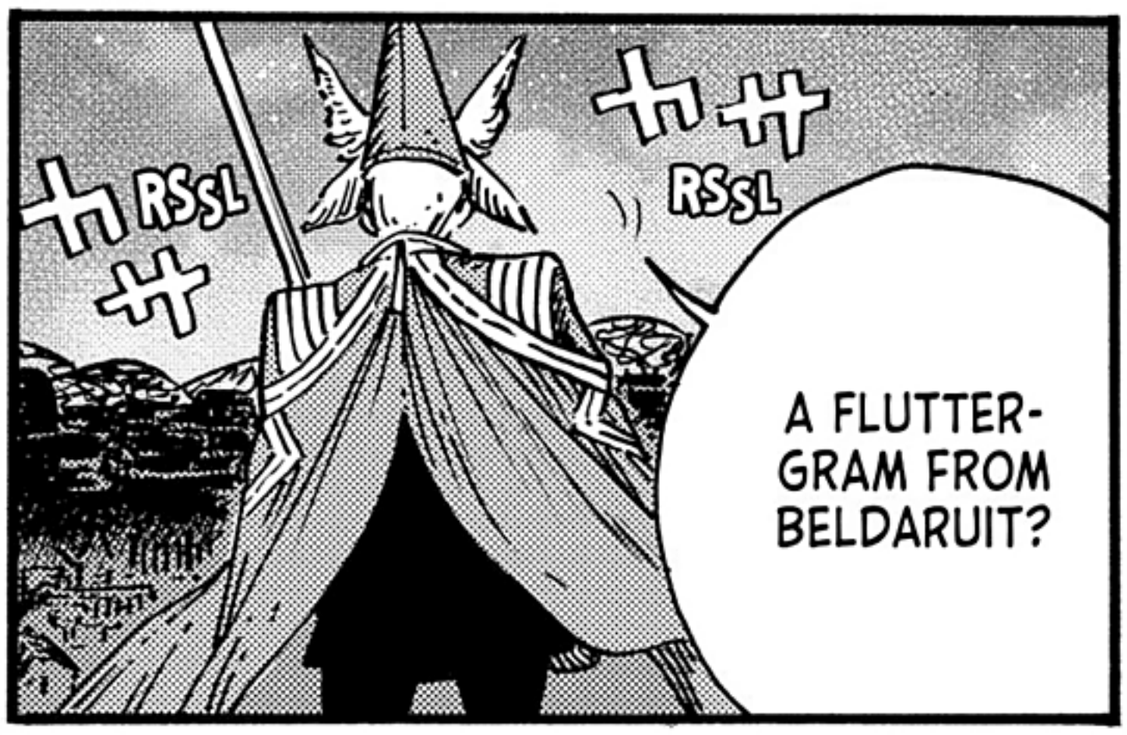

REALLY, NOW...
...
KA-KLANG
LORD BELDARUIT ...?
OF ALL THINGS...
WHAT AM I TO DO?
FREE-SPIRITED TO A FAULT.
IMPERTI-NENT.
IT JUST HAD TO BE RECKLESS.
FWUM

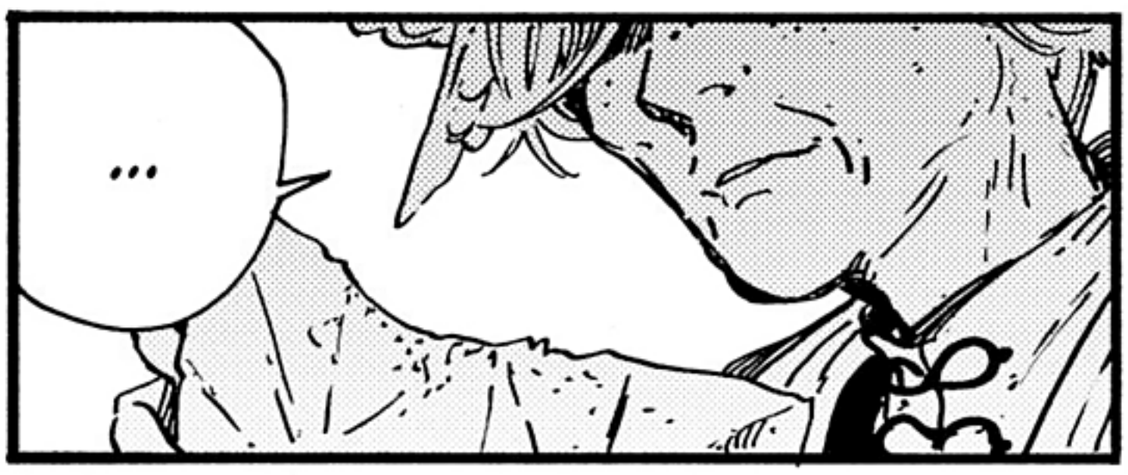

TWIRL!
TWIRL!
EXACTLY THE SORT OF IDEA I ADORE.


IN FACT...
...THE SHEER ABSURDITY HAS INSPIRED MY MIND TO TAKE IT ONE STEP FURTHER...
...AND NOW I'M LEFT WITH A POSSIBILITY I SIMPLY MUST SEE TO.

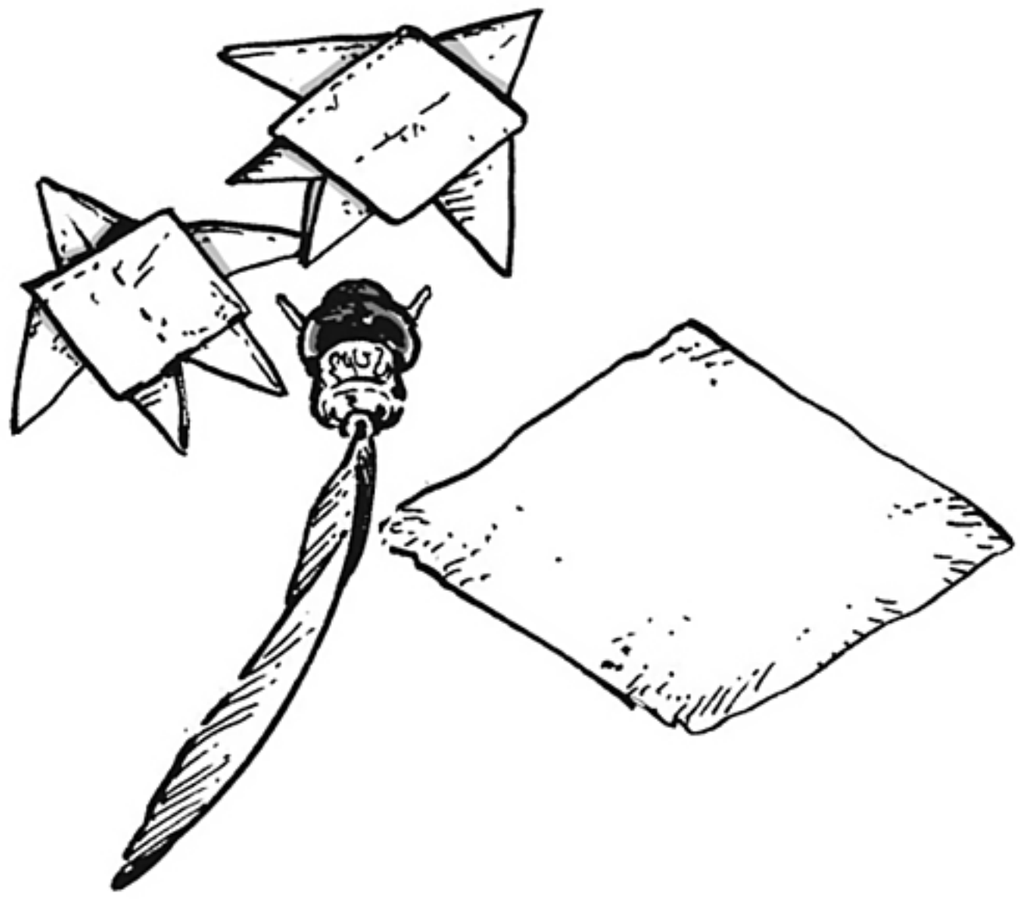
...!
DOES THAT MEAN...?!

Witch Hat Atelier

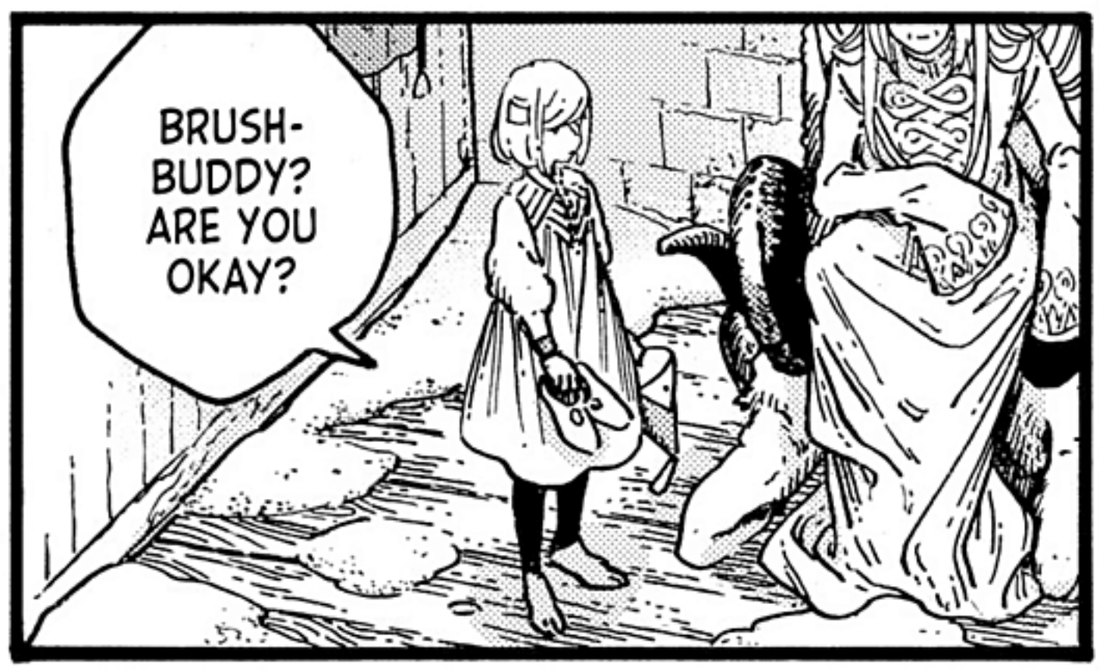


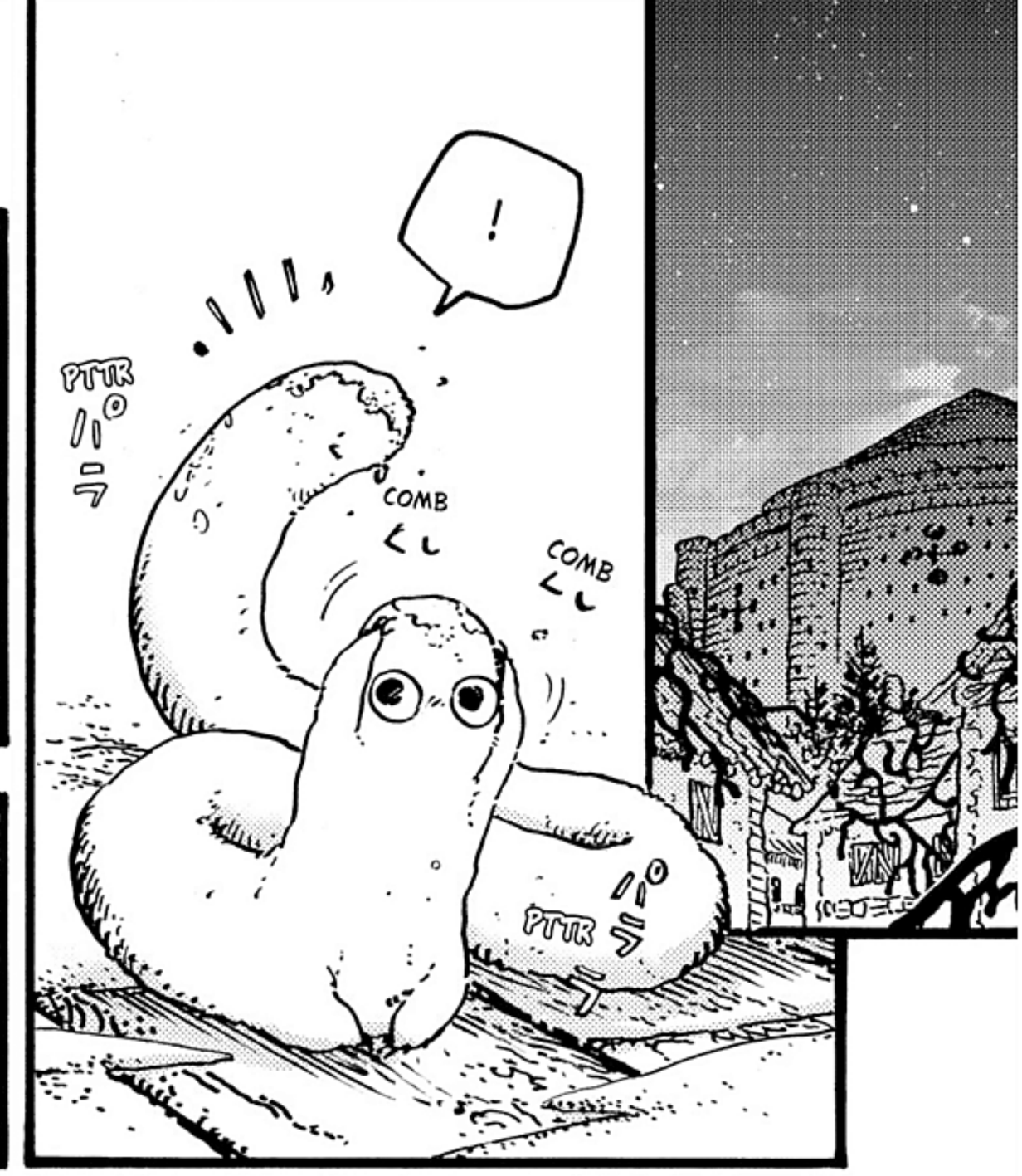


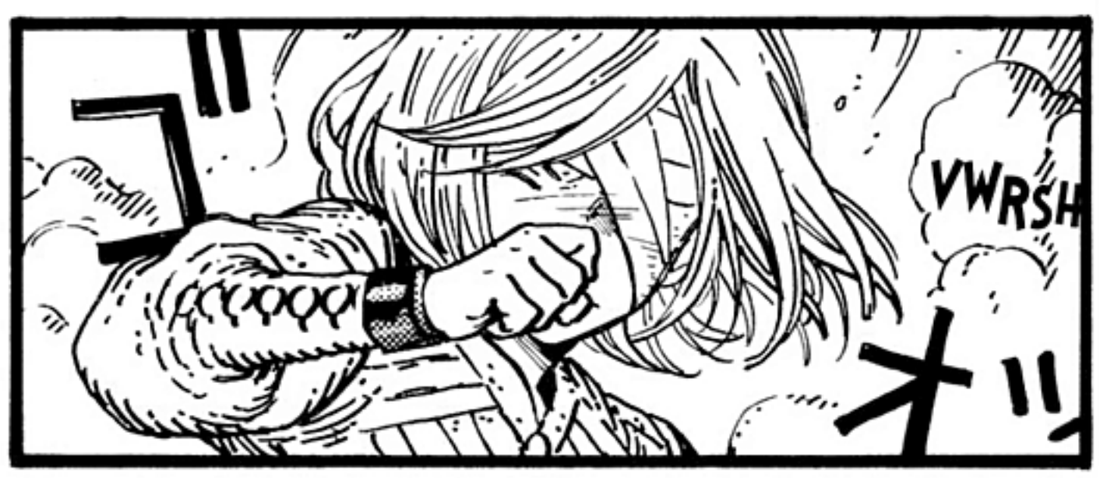
Chapter 73 ♦ End



Chapter 74



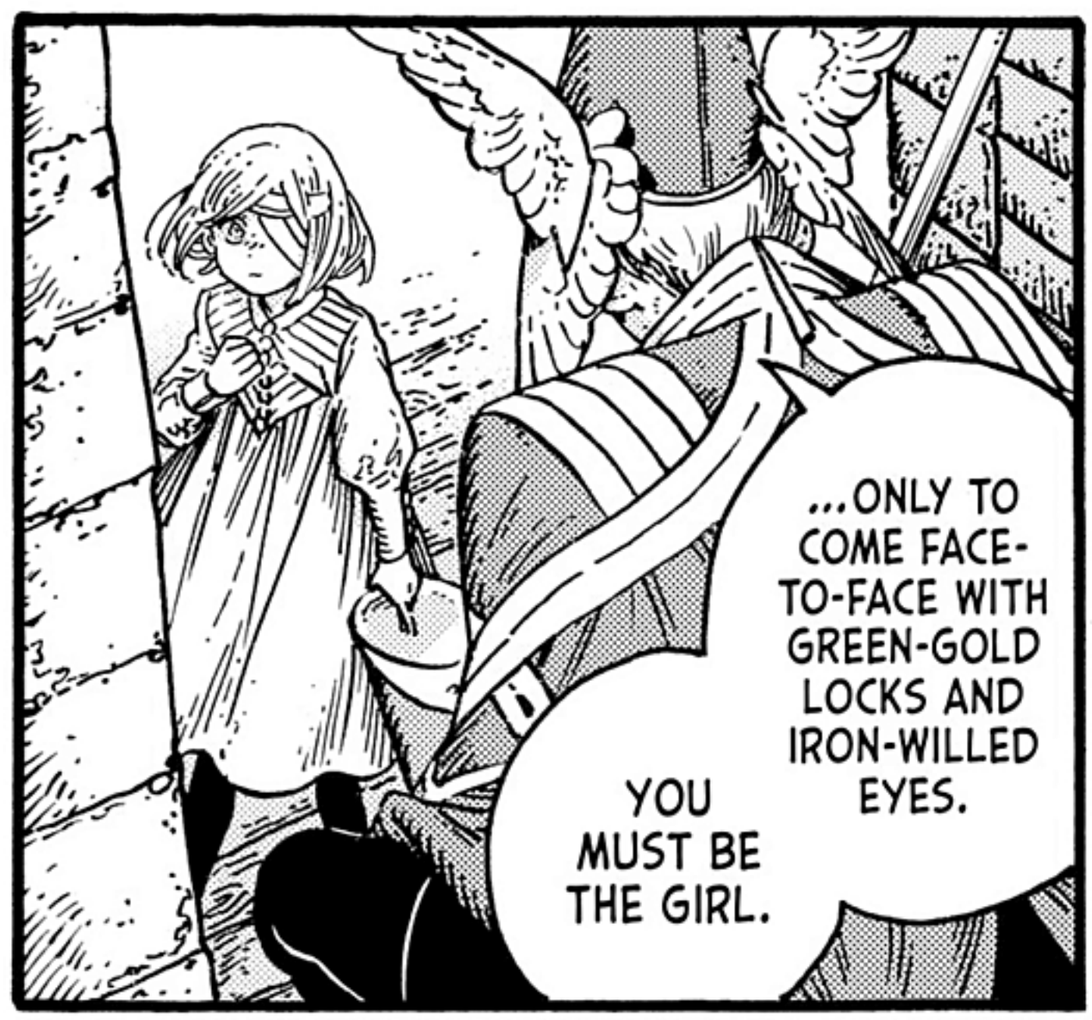


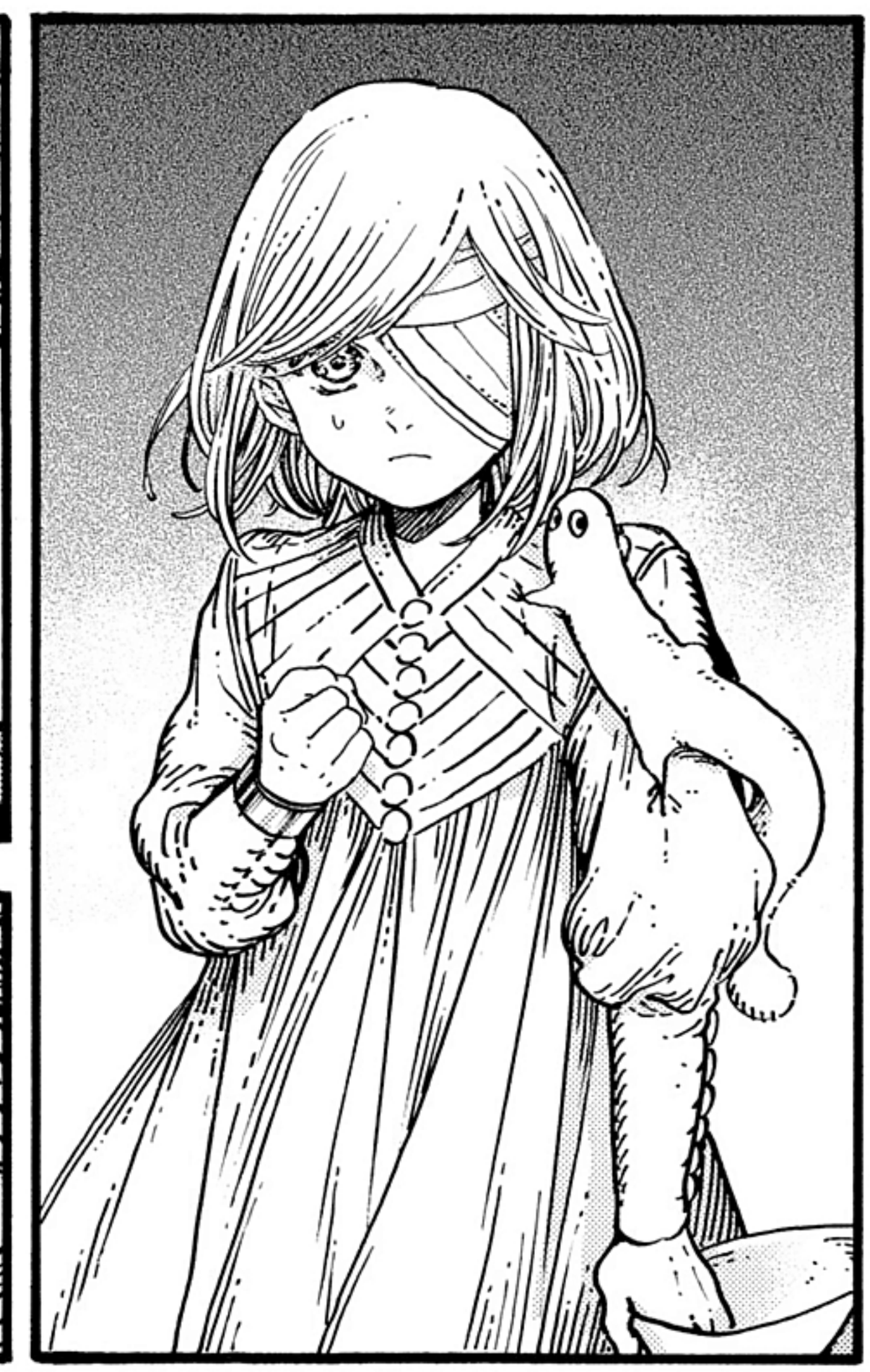


MY, MY...

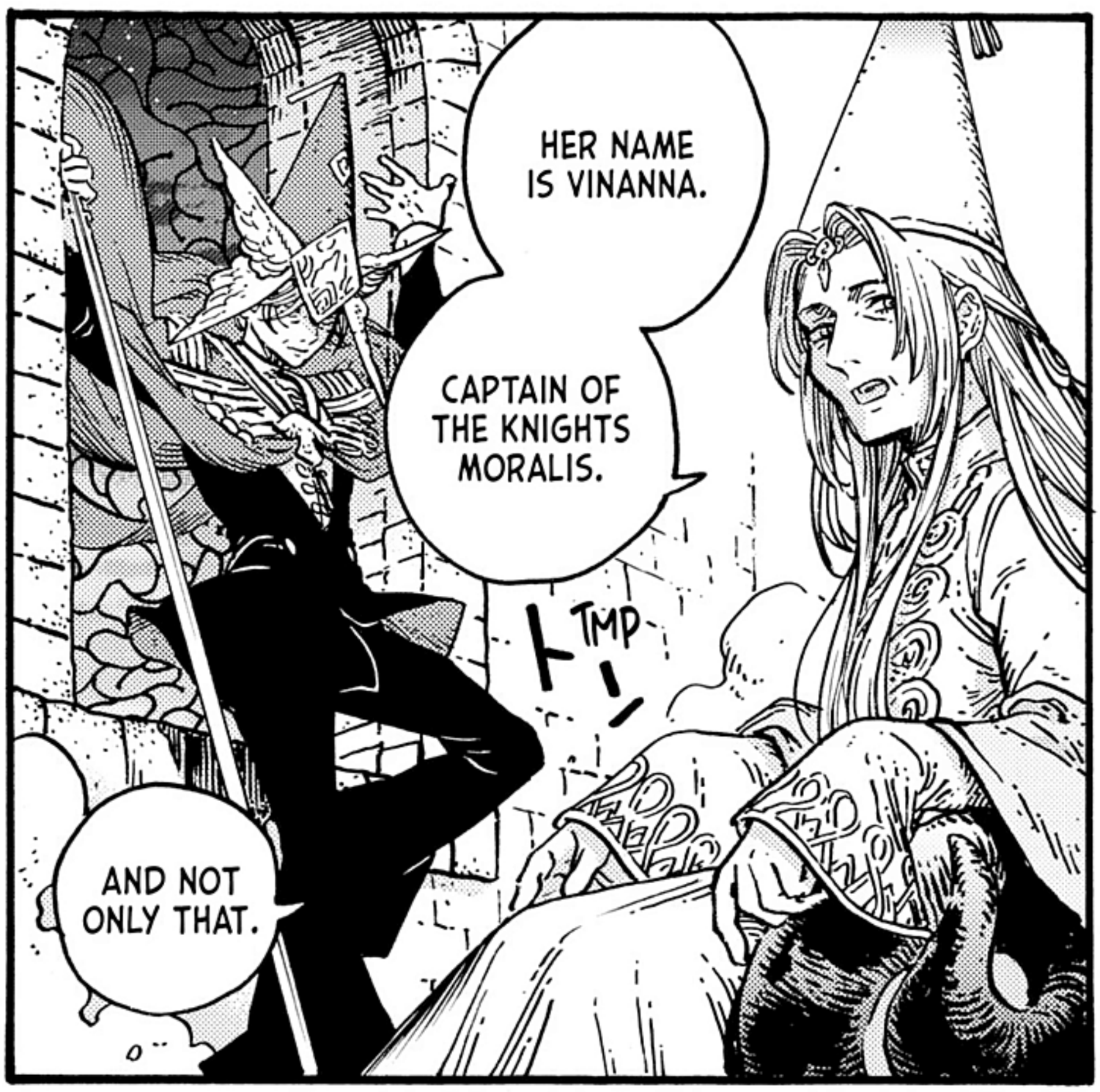
HERE I COME BARRELING IN TO CONFRONT A GREAT FOOL...

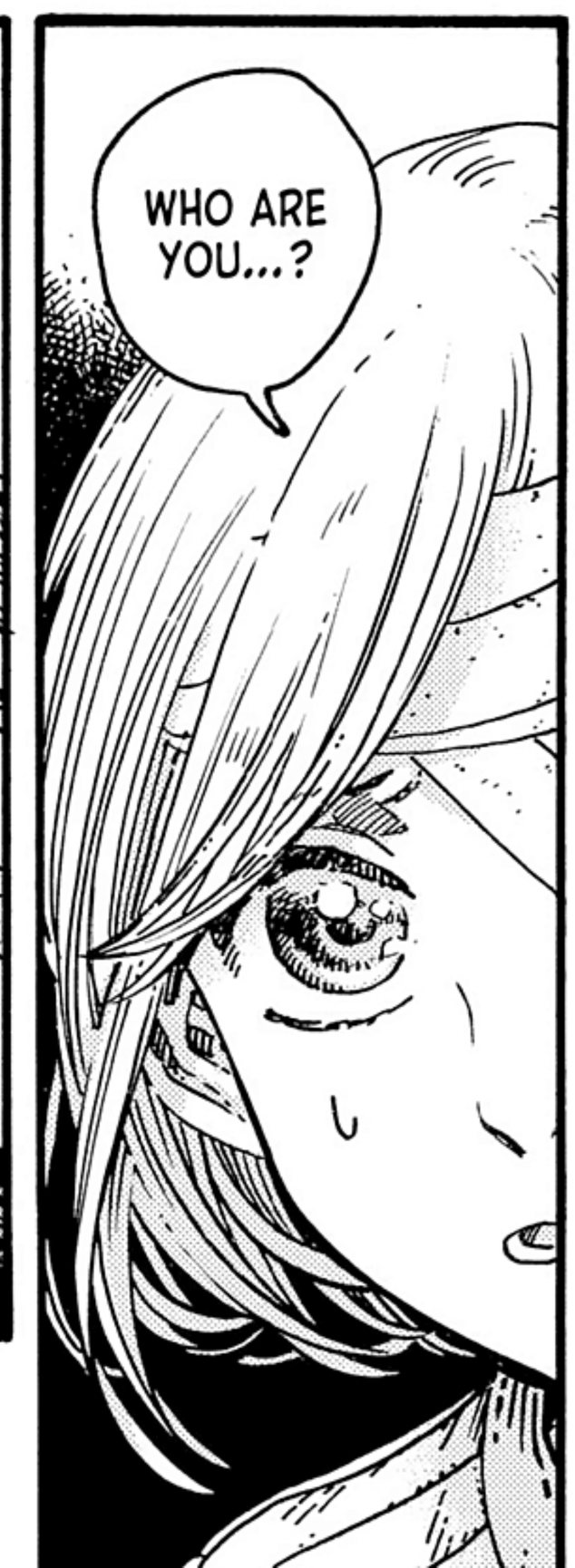
...AND KNOCK HIM FREE OF HIS WORST PROPOSAL YET...


...ONLY TO COME FACE-TO-FACE WITH GREEN-GOLD LOCKS AND IRON-WILLED EYES.
YOU MUST BE THE GIRL.



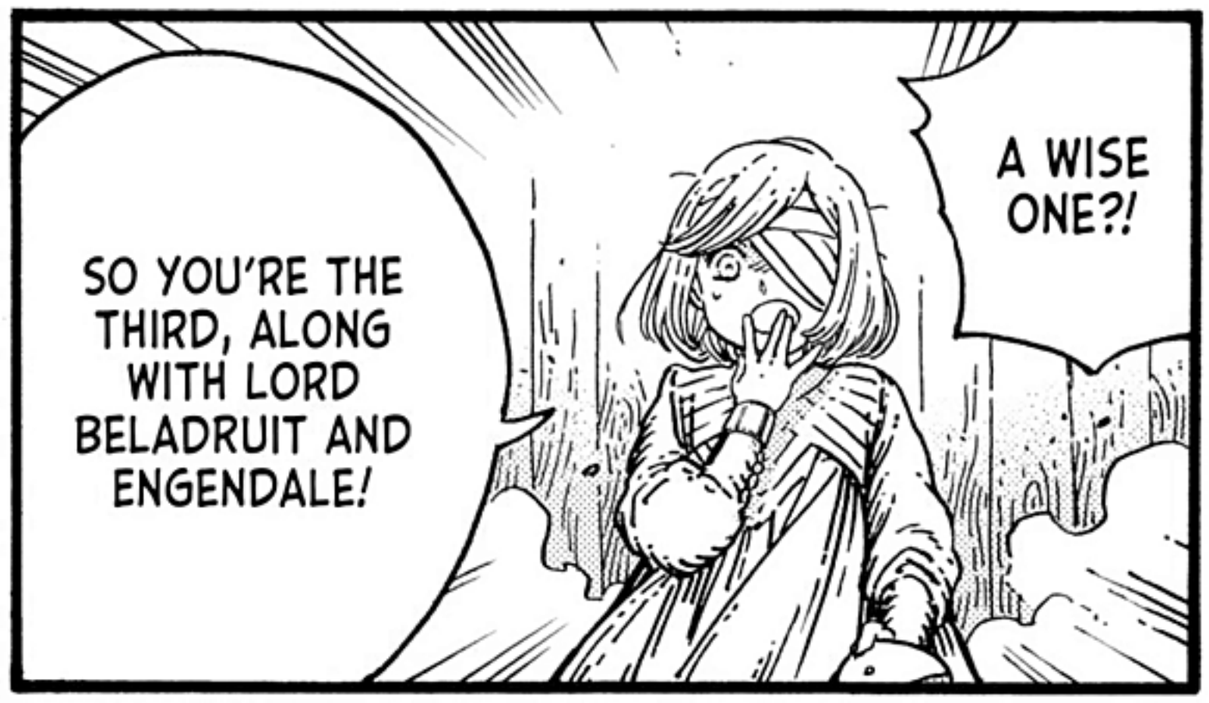
THE LITTLE ONE WEIGHING SO HEAVILY ON EASTHIES' MIND.

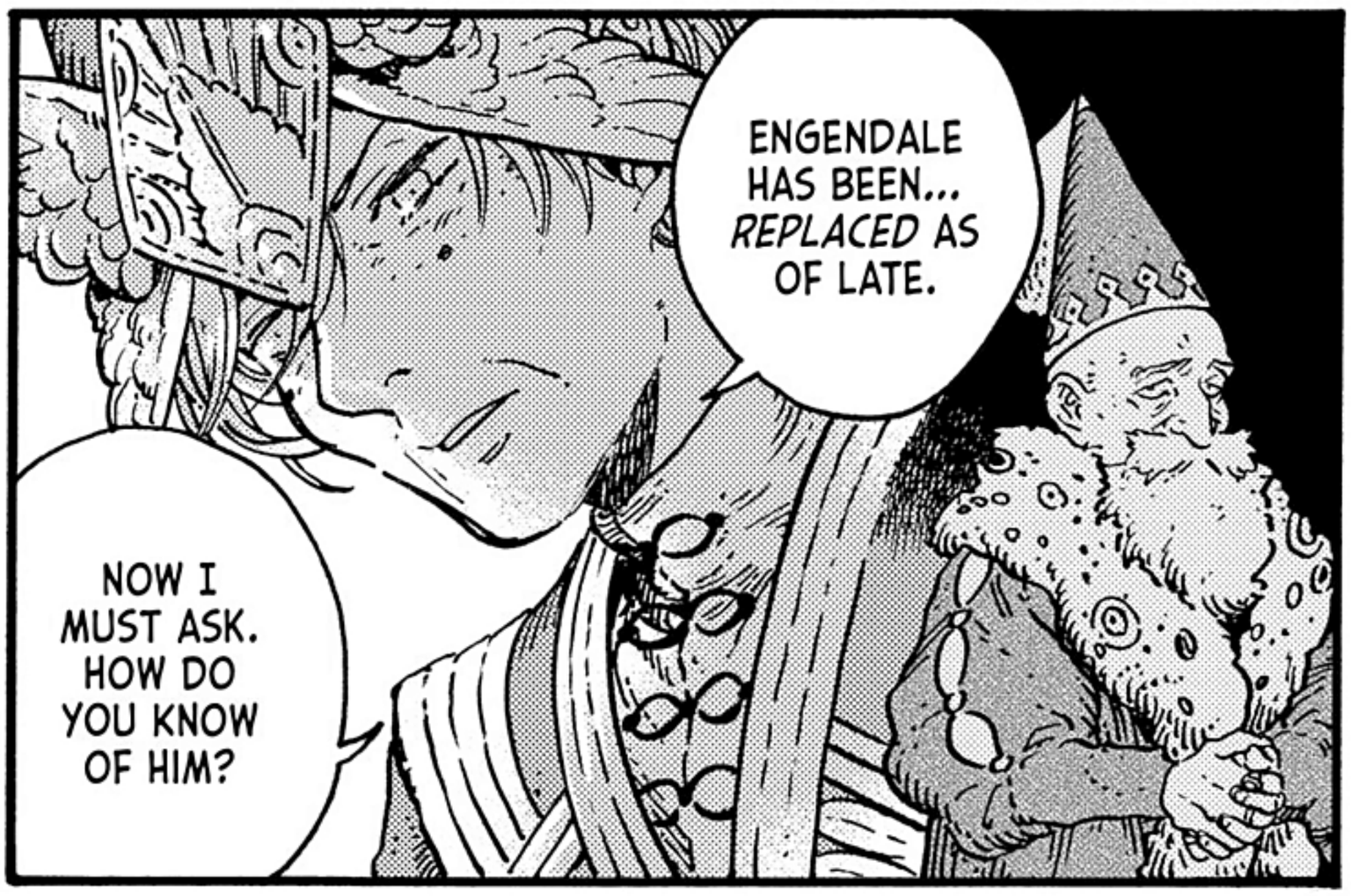

HER NAME IS VINANNA.
CAPTAIN OF THE KNIGHTS MORALIS.
TMP
AND NOT ONLY THAT.

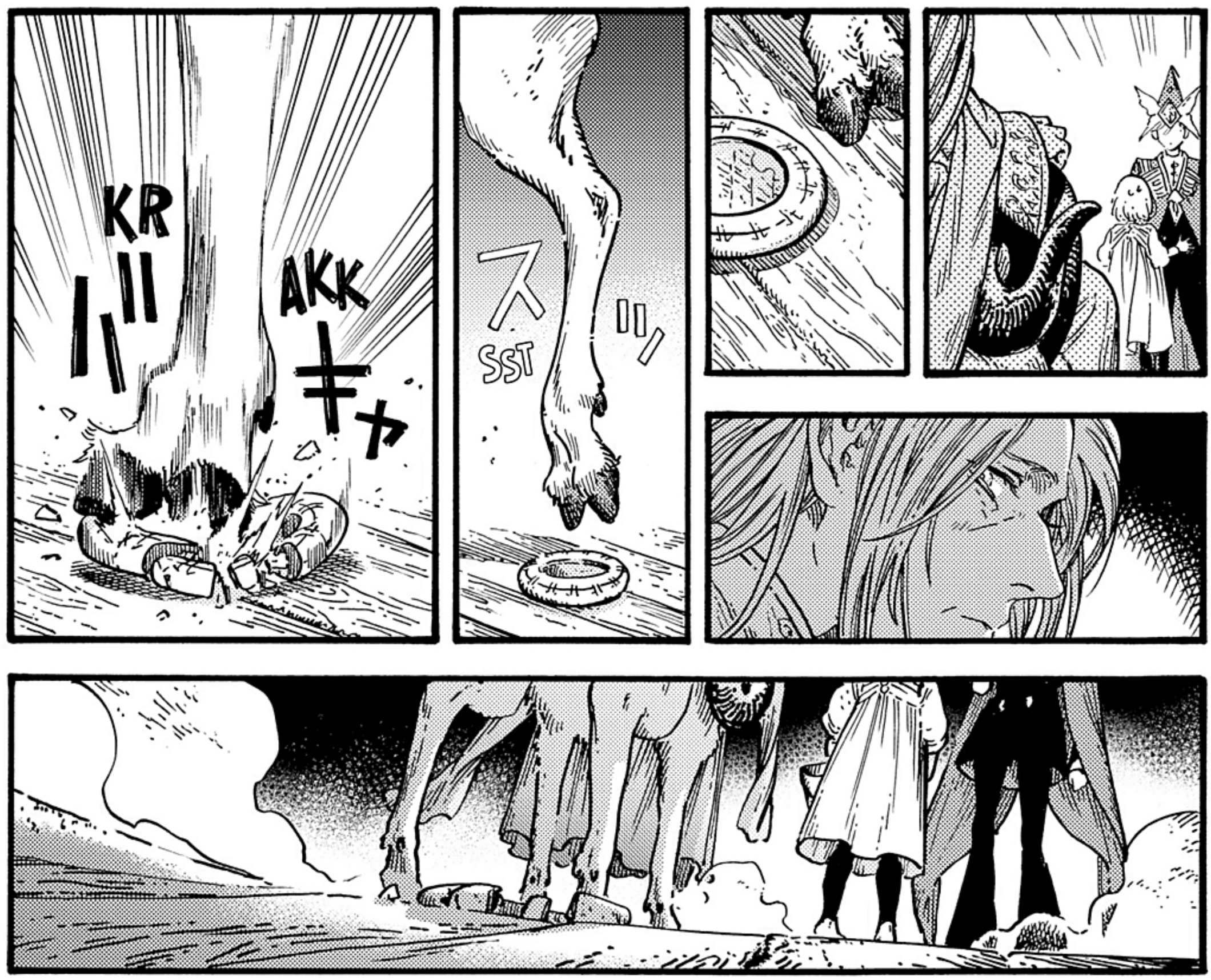

WHO ARE YOU...?

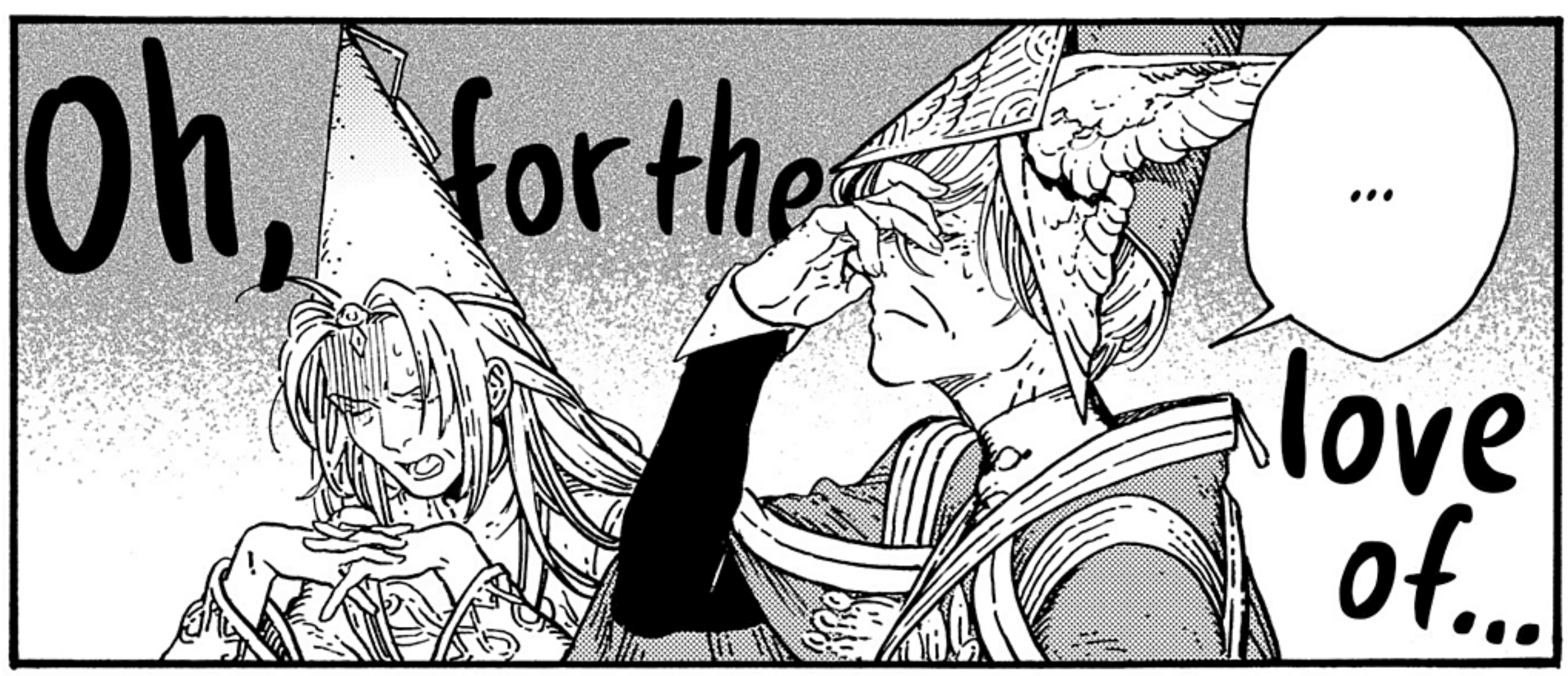
IT IS A PLEASURE TO MAKE YOUR ACQUAINTANCE, YOUNG COCO.

TO THOSE OUTSIDE THE ORDER'S RANKS, I'M OFT ADDRESSED AS VINANNA THE WISE— IN *PRINCIPLES*, TO BE PRECISE.

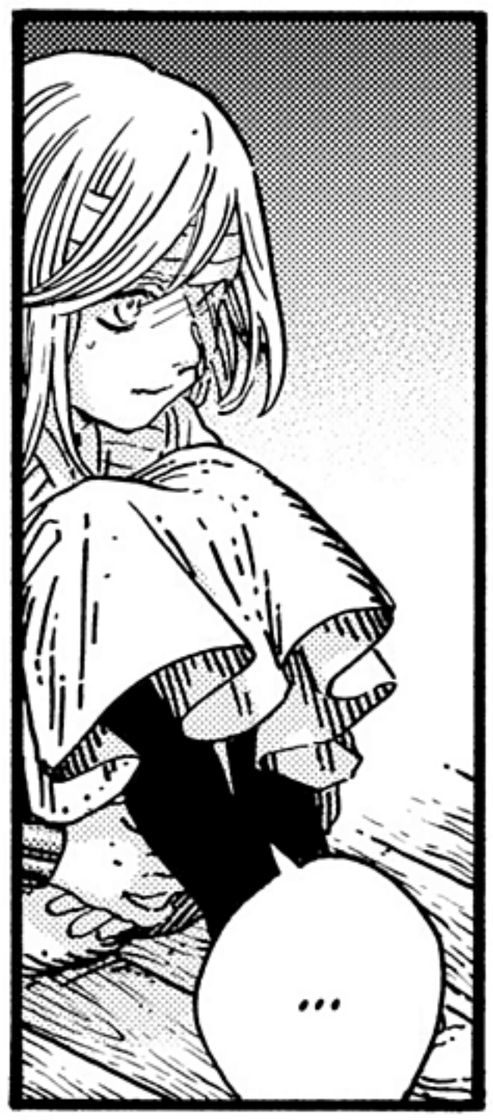




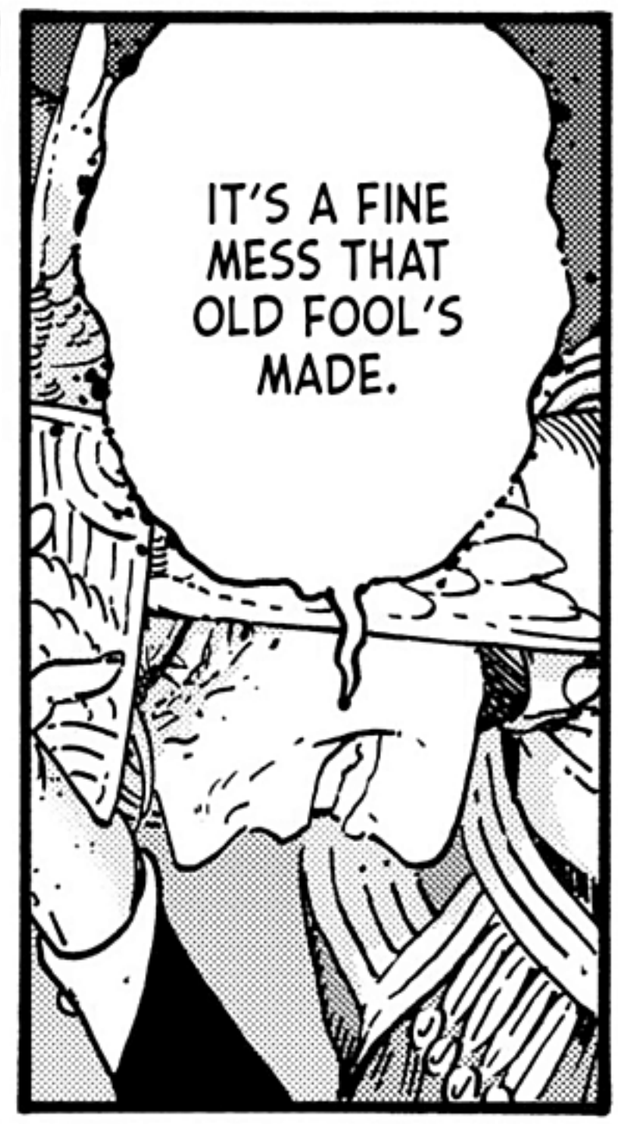

KR
AKK
SST

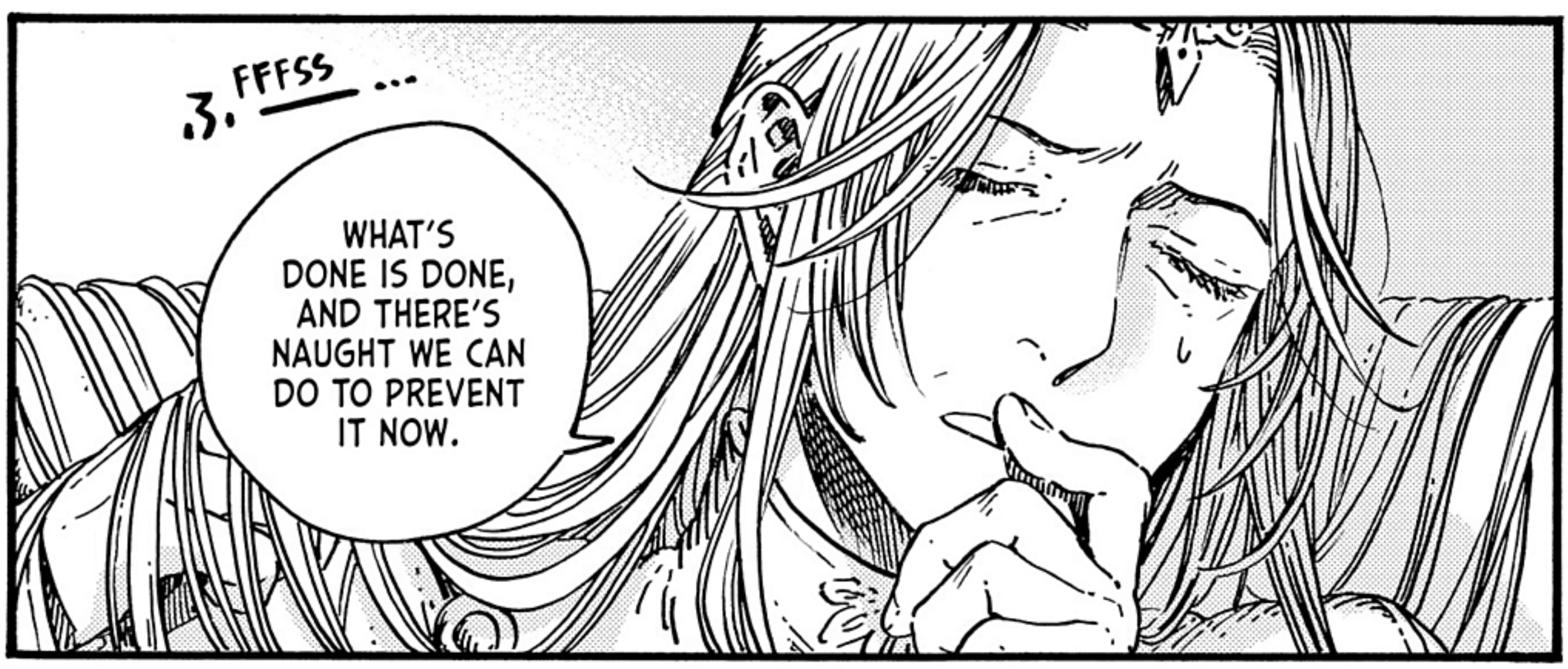

Oh, for the
...
love of...

AND IT WAS EASY ENOUGH TO IMAGINE A SPELL SPUN OUT OF CONTROL.
THE LEECH IS NO *NATURAL* OCCURRENCE. THAT MUCH IS CLEAR.
I HAD MY SUSPICIONS ABOUT TONIGHT'S EVENTS.
...THAT ENGENDALE COULD GO SO FAR.
BUT FOR ALL THAT, I NEVER WOULD HAVE BELIEVED...
MASTER QIFREY KEPT ME SAFE WHILE... UM...
THAT'S RIGHT...
HE'S ALSO TO BLAME FOR YOUR INJURY?
I SEE...
WELL, THE LAST THING I REALLY REMEMBER IS MASTER QIFREY DEFEATING HIM AND CARRYING HIM TO THE CASTLE.


...

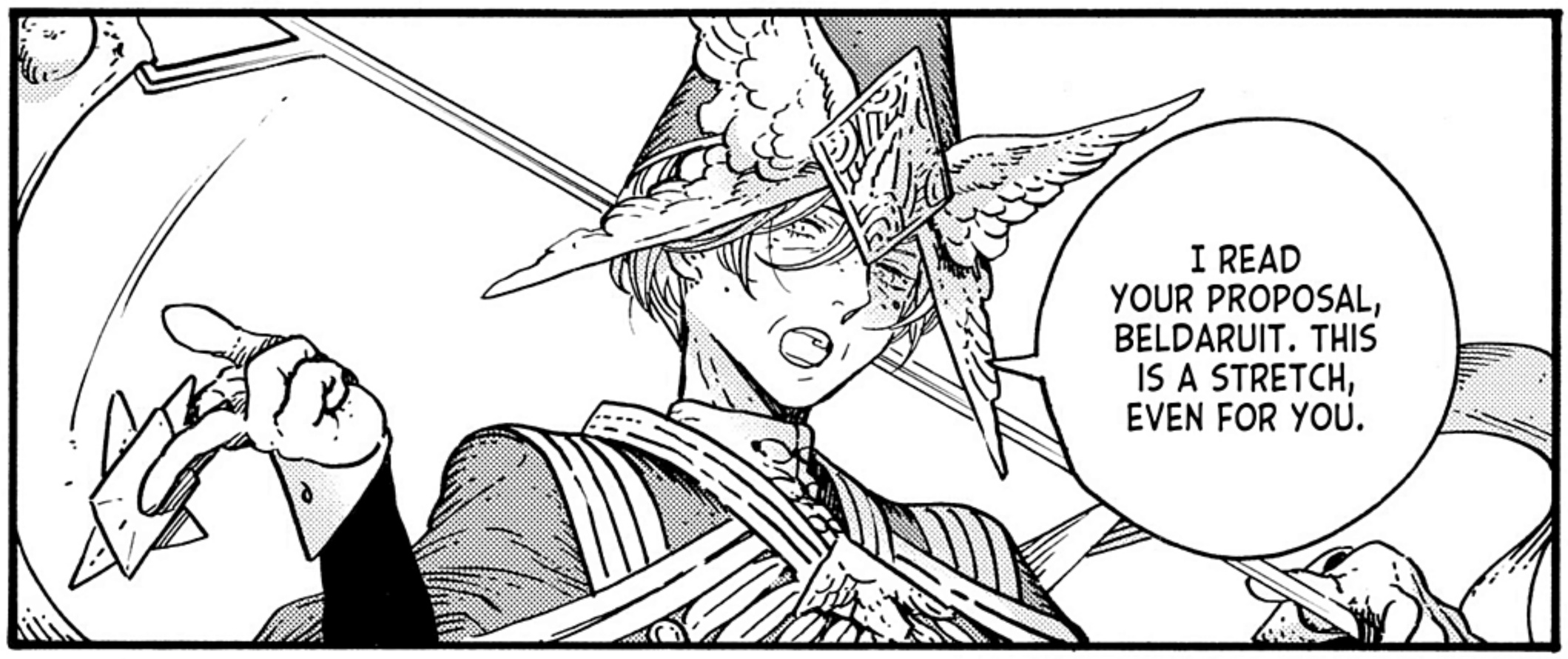
...INSTEAD OF DELAYING OUT OF RESPECT FOR THE FESTIVAL.
WE SHOULD HAVE CARRIED OUT HIS SENTENCE ON THE SPOT...

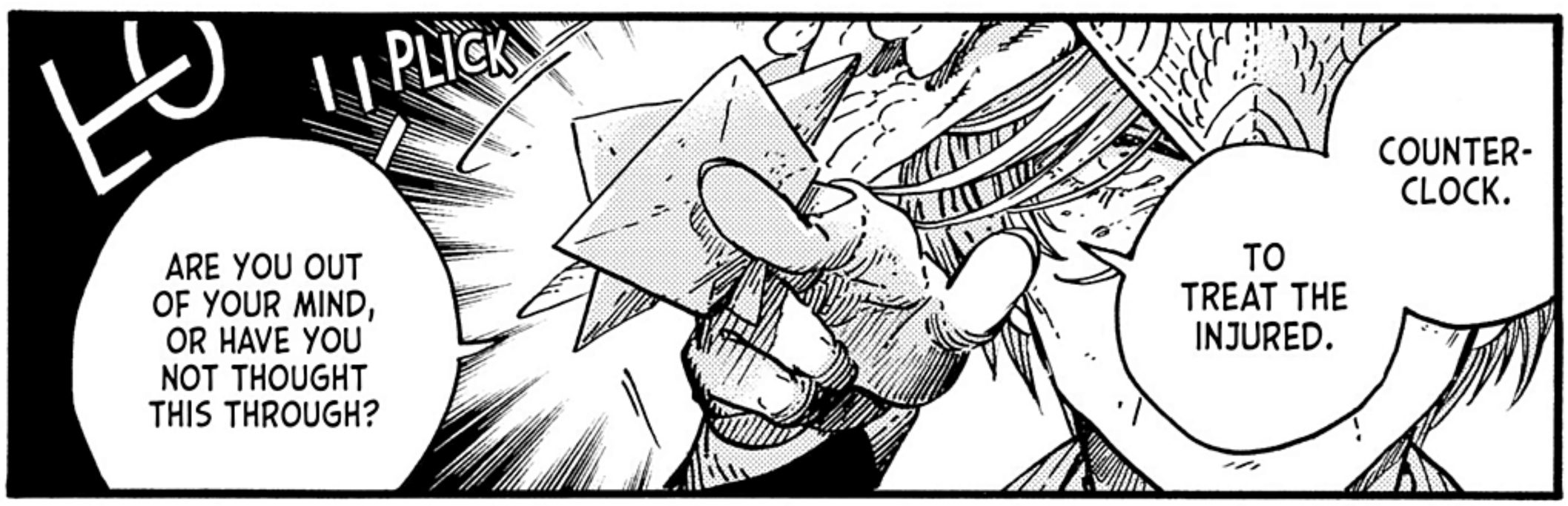

IT'S A FINE MESS THAT OLD FOOL'S MADE.

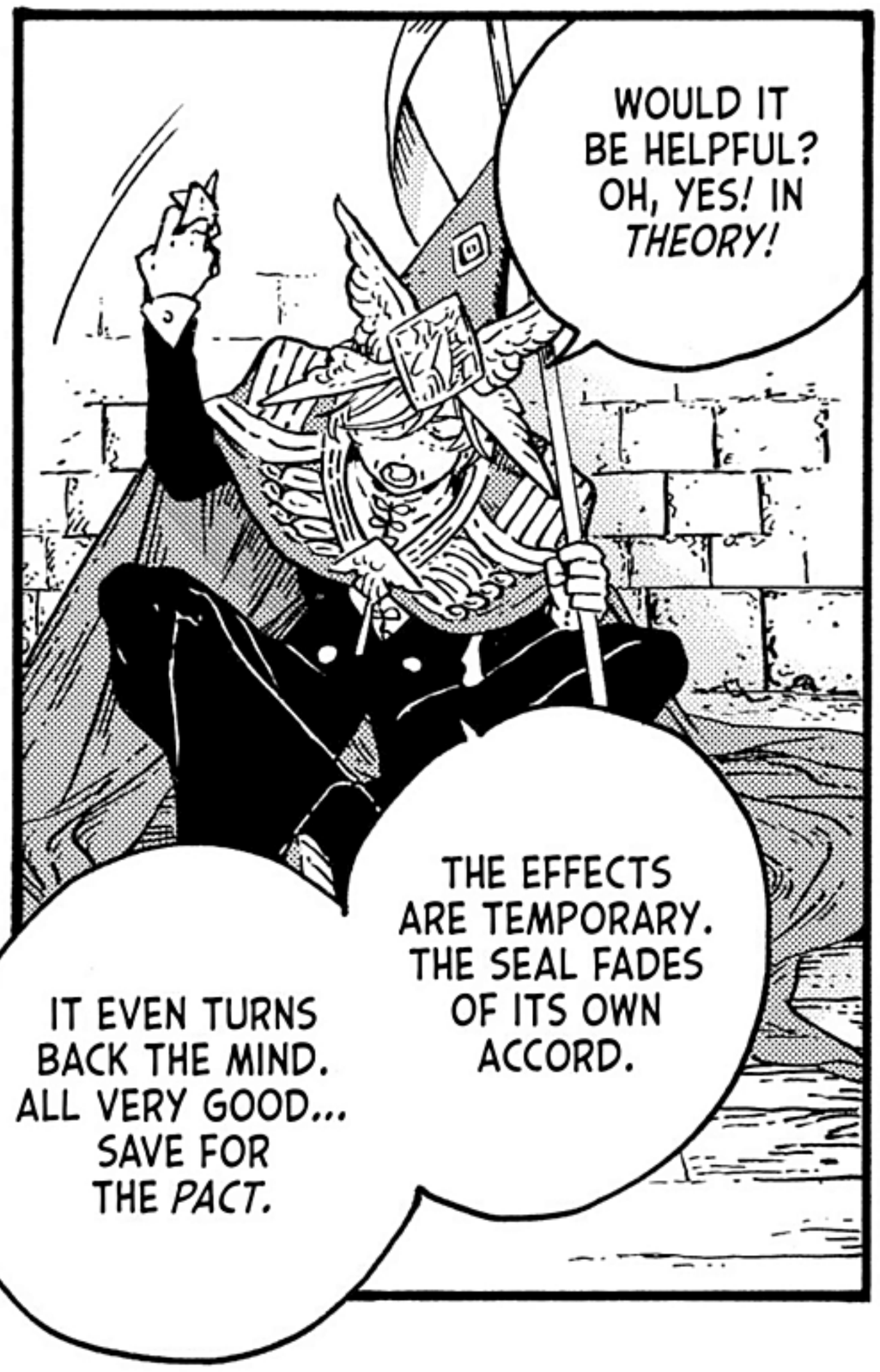

3. FFFSS ...
WHAT'S DONE IS DONE, AND THERE'S NAUGHT WE CAN DO TO PREVENT IT NOW.

THAT'S NO EXCUSE FOR *THIS*.

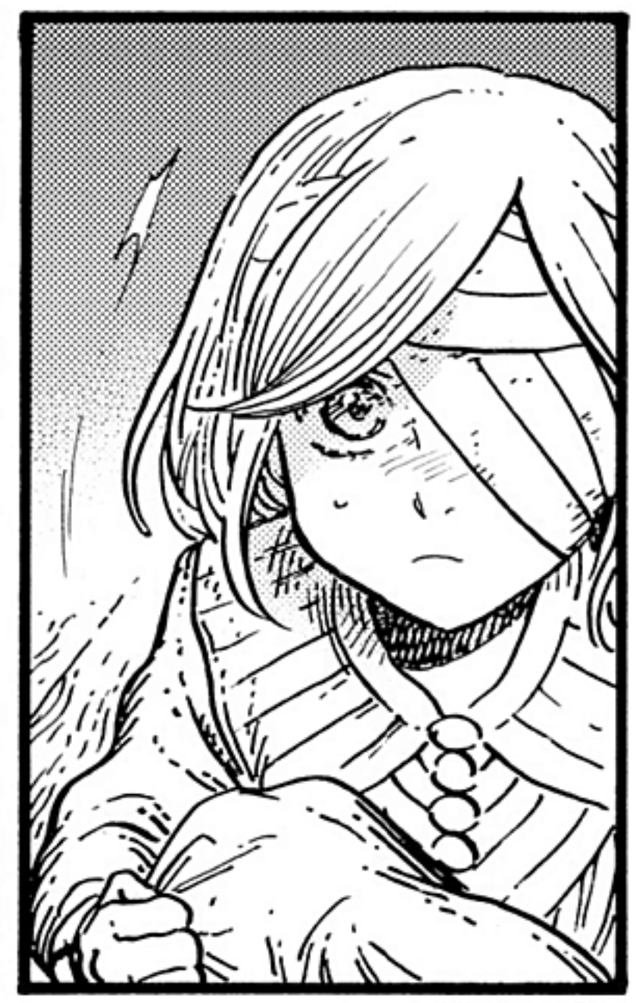
BUT IT DOES CALL INTO QUESTION OUR OBLIGATION HENCEFORTH.
IF THIS WAS ENGENDALE'S DOING, WE CANNOT SIT BY IN SILENCE.

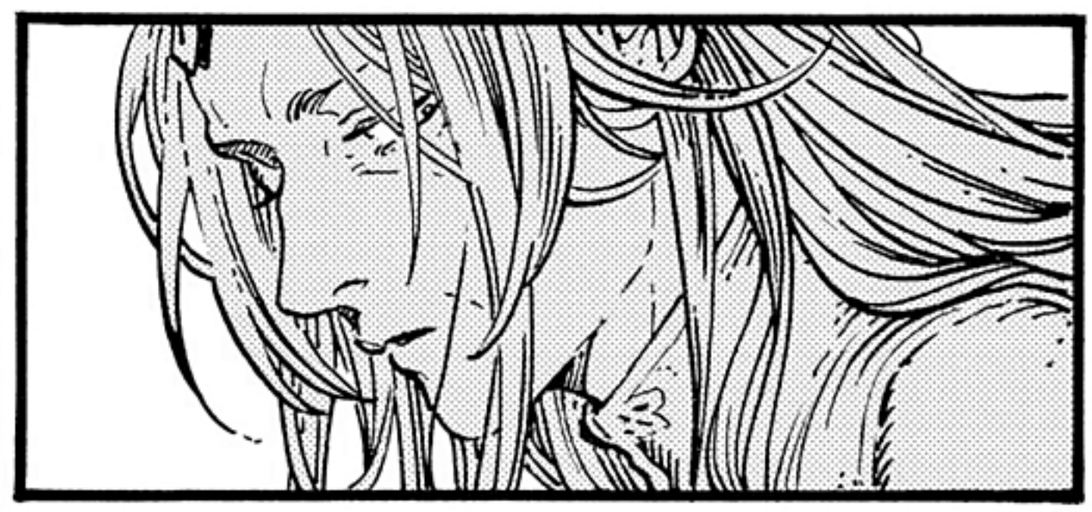

I READ YOUR PROPOSAL, BELDARUIT. THIS IS A STRETCH, EVEN FOR YOU.


PLICK
ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR MIND, OR HAVE YOU NOT THOUGHT THIS THROUGH?
COUNTER-CLOCK.
TO TREAT THE INJURED.


WOULD IT BE HELPFUL? OH, YES! IN *THEORY!*
THE EFFECTS ARE TEMPORARY. THE SEAL FADES OF ITS OWN ACCORD.
IT EVEN TURNS BACK THE MIND. ALL VERY GOOD... SAVE FOR THE *PACT.*

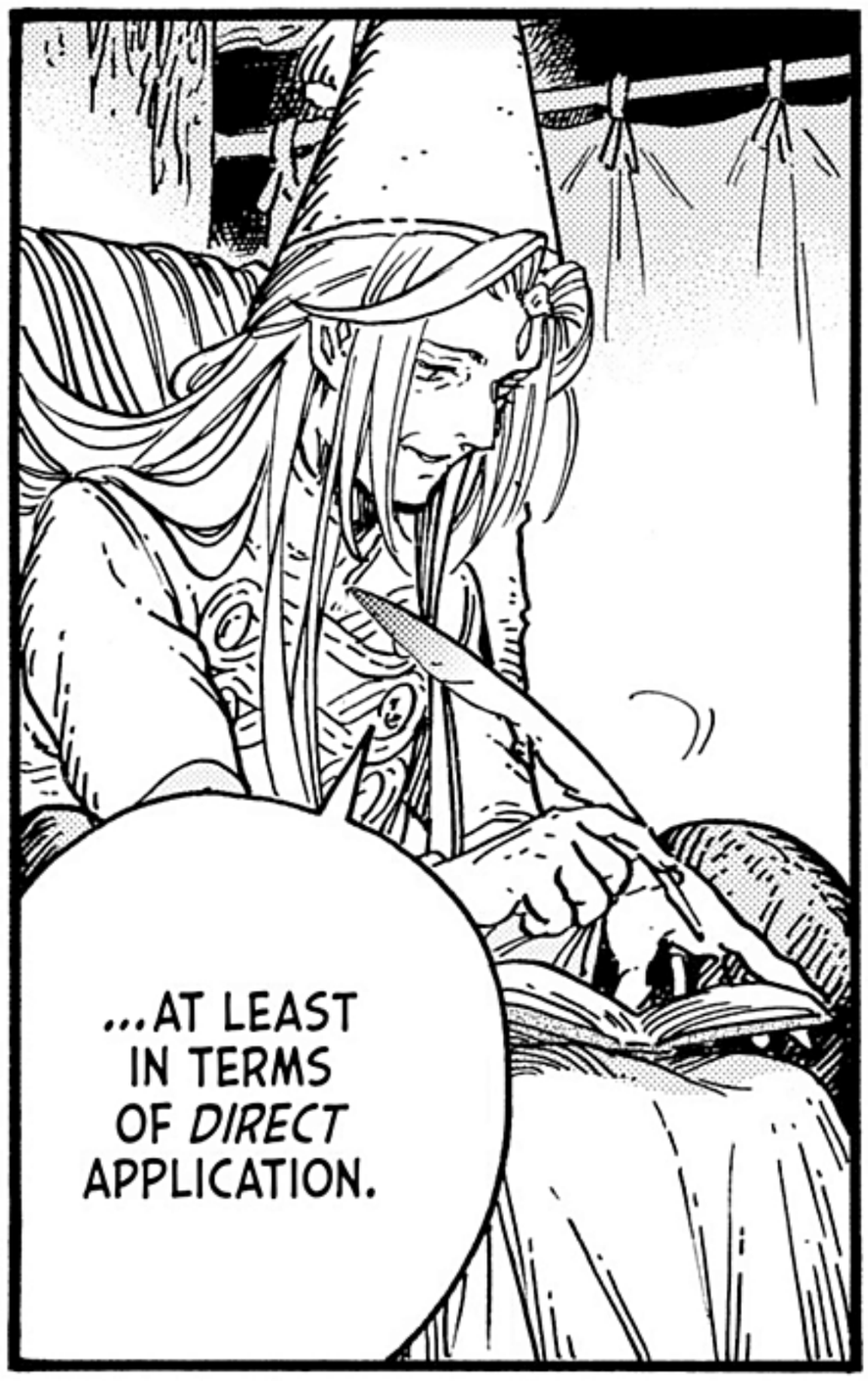
GWIP
ギゃ...

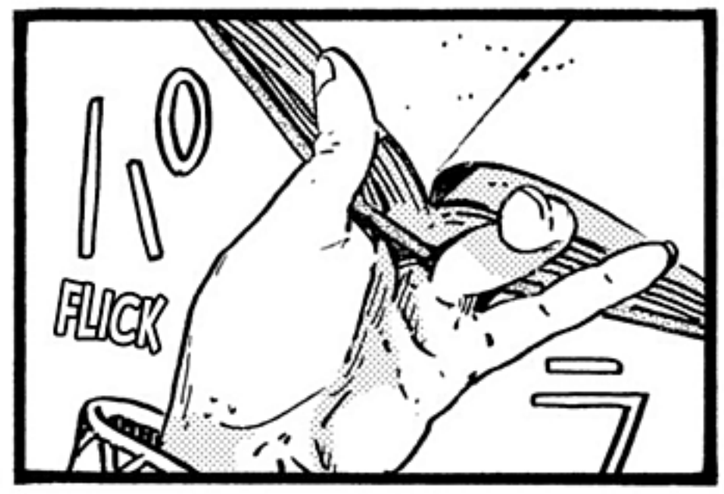




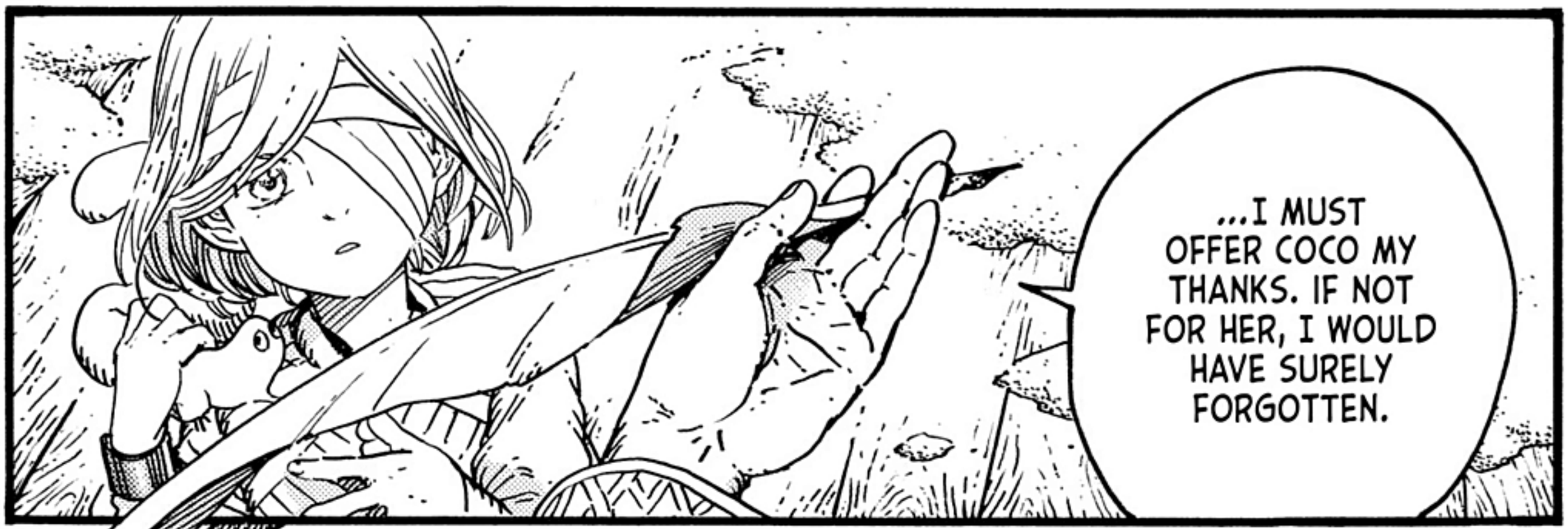
THINK WITH ME, IF YOU WOULD... WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE SPELL IS REPURPOSED FOR EVIL?
CRMPL
HOW MANY ARE THE WAYS COUNTERCLOCK COULD BE USED TO THREATEN OR TO TORTURE...
...OR TO EXERCISE CONTROL OVER OTHERS?
I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW I CAME UP WITH *TWENTY-SIX* ON MY FLIGHT OVER.
IN EXCESS, GOOD HERBS BECOME POISON. AS DO GOOD SPELLS.
WHEN THE LINE IS HARD TO DRAW, BETTER TO PROHIBIT IT ALTOGETHER.

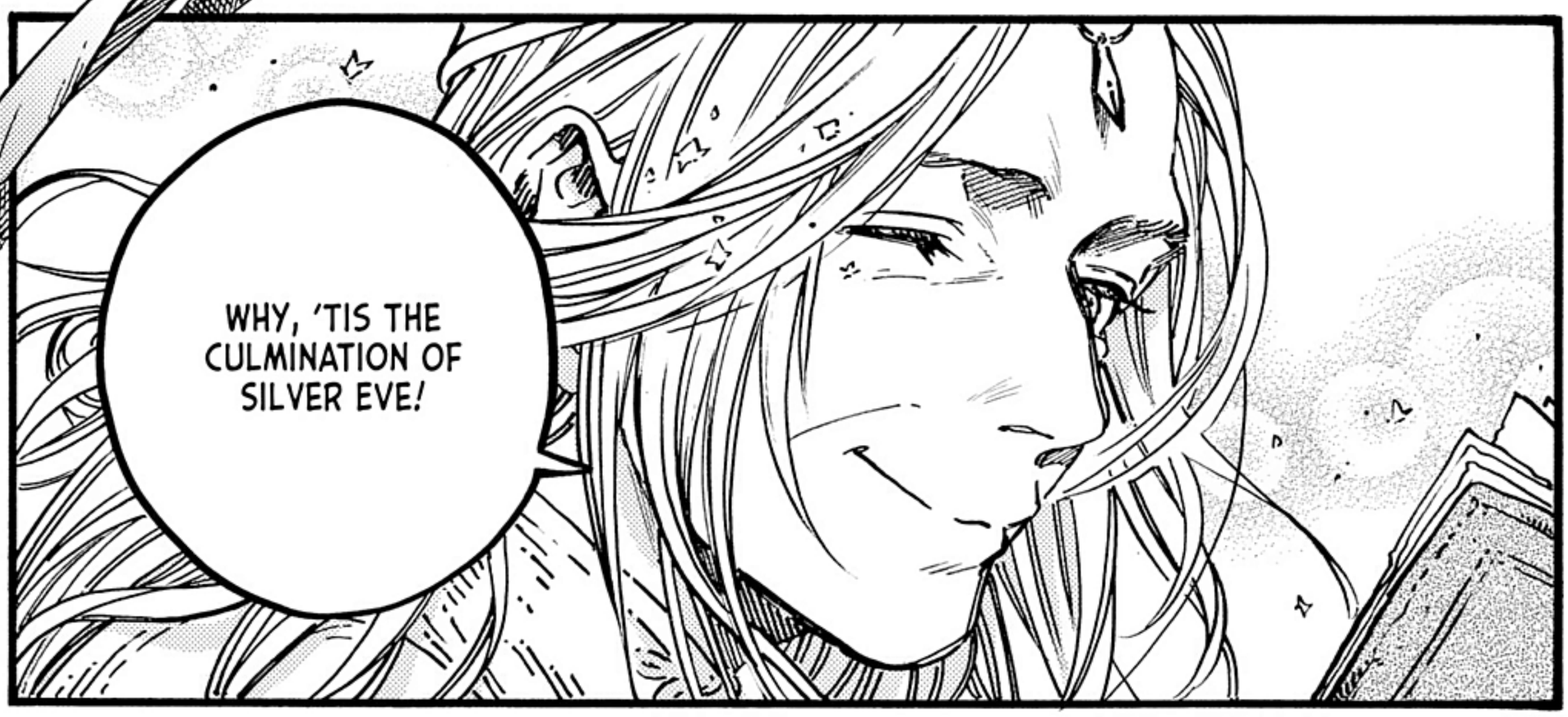
MEANING?


...AT LEAST IN TERMS OF *DIRECT* APPLICATION.


FLICK

A POINT WELL MADE, VINANNA...

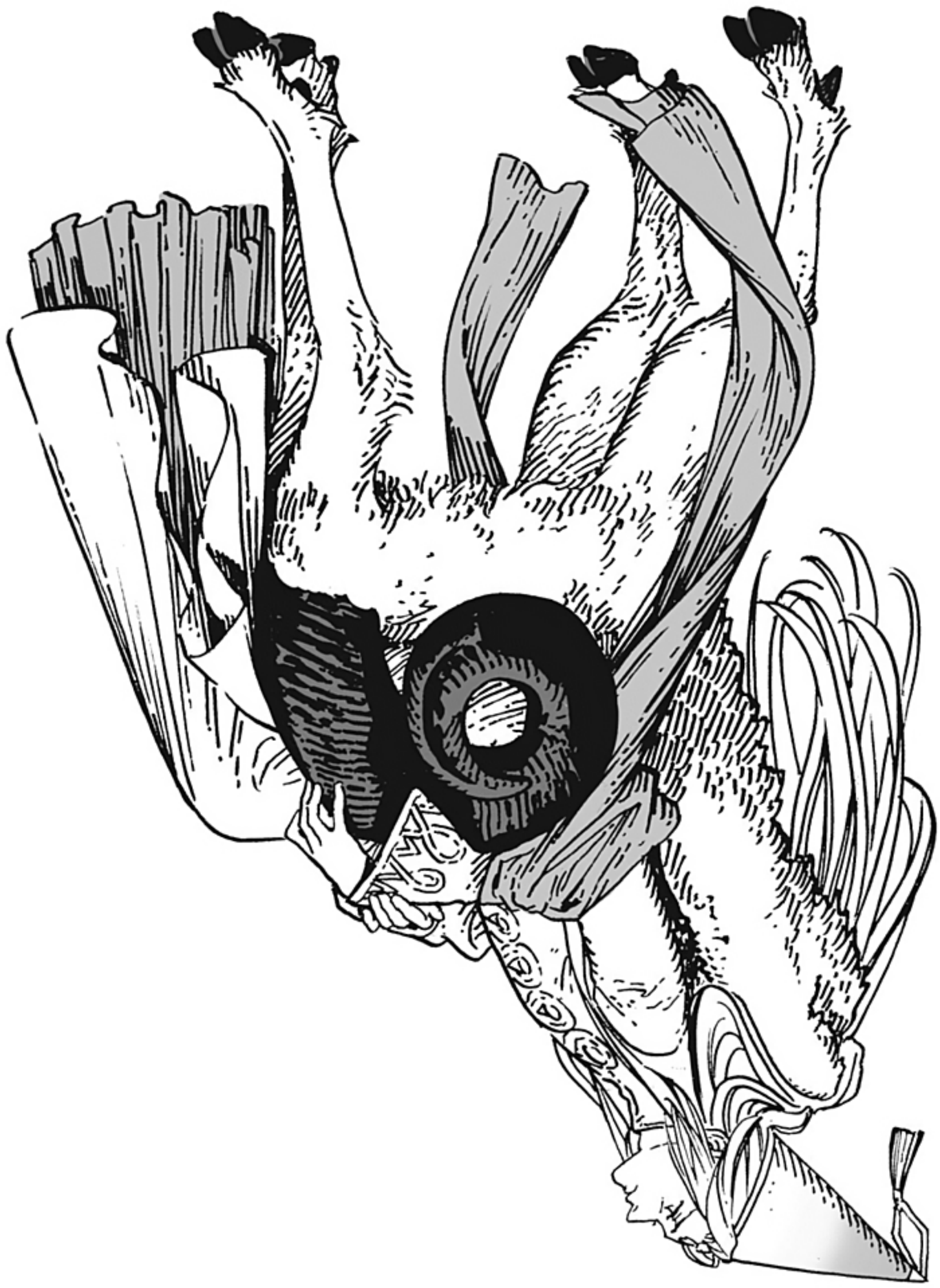

...I MUST OFFER COCO MY THANKS. IF NOT FOR HER, I WOULD HAVE SURELY FORGOTTEN.


WHY, 'TIS THE CULMINATION OF SILVER EVE!

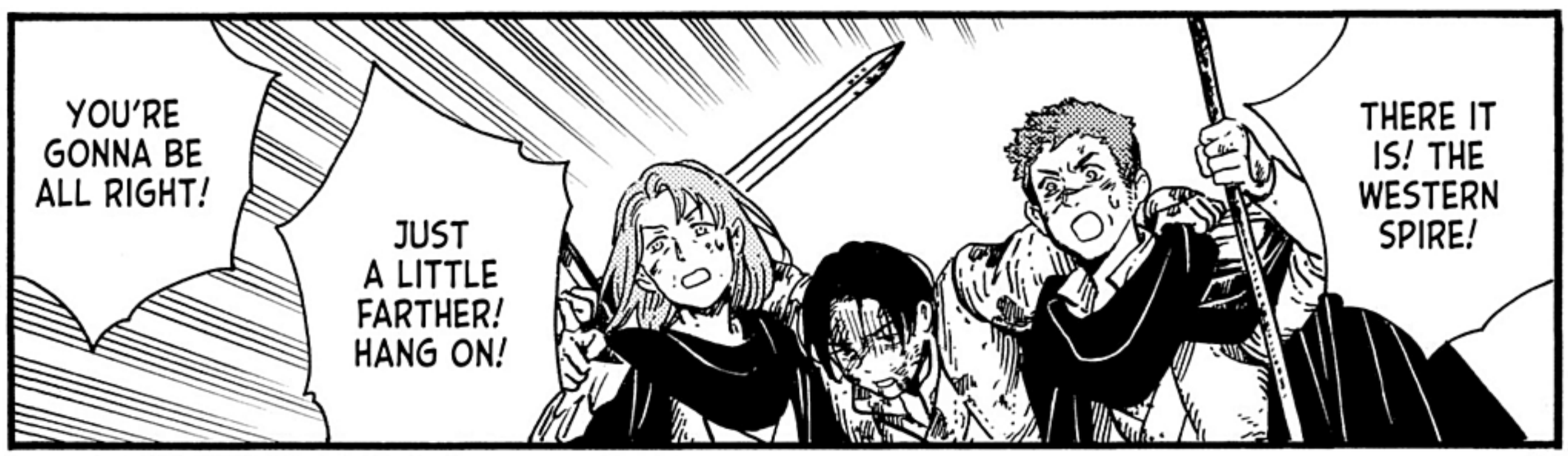
THE NIGHT FOR A WITCH TO DEBUT A NEW CREATION...
...TO CONQUER HARDSHIP AND DISPEL TRIBULATION.
IN DARKNESS, OUR SPELLS MOST INSPIRE. AND SHOULD NOT OUR FESTIVAL END WITH A FLOURISH?

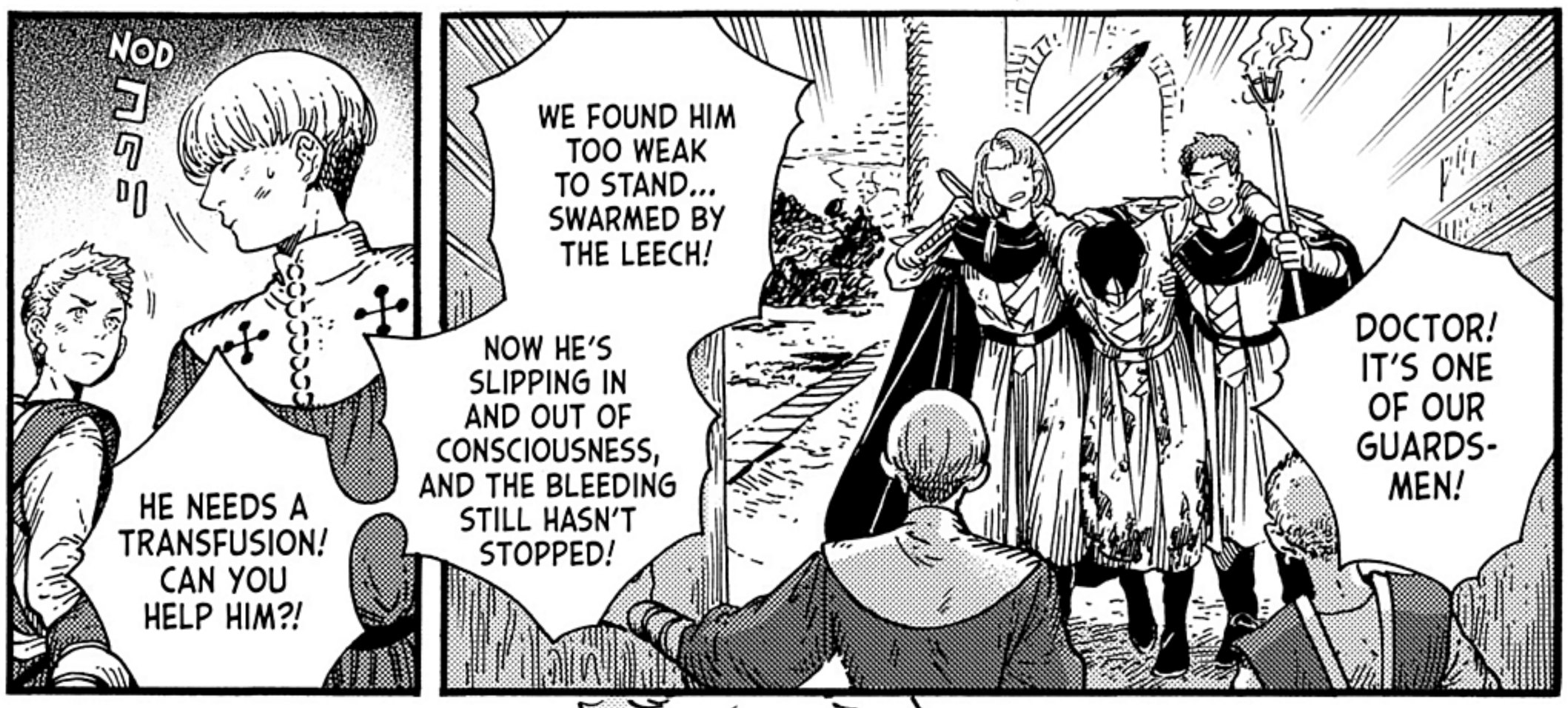
ゴッ
オッ
WRSH
THIS IS...!

Witch Hat Atelier



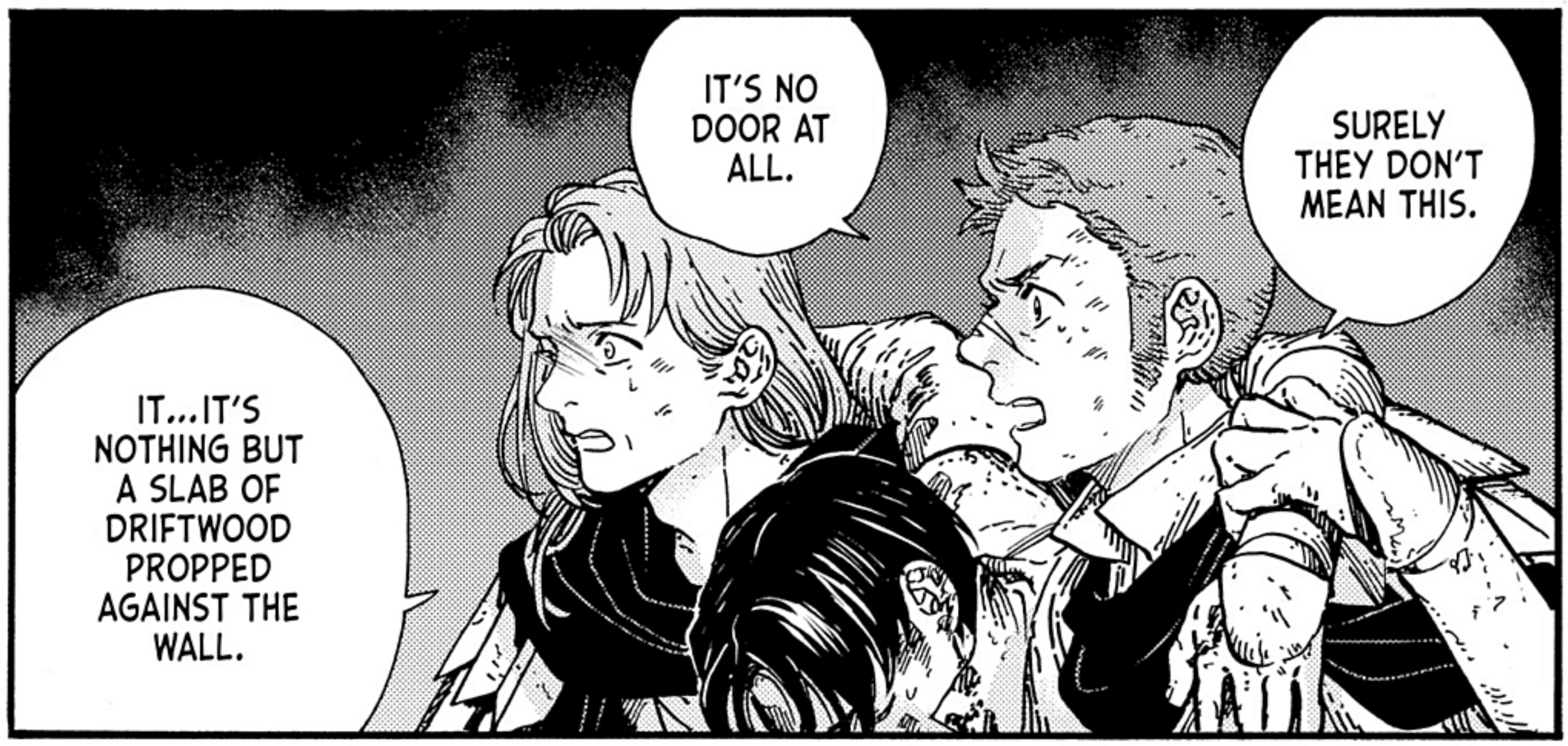
CHAPTER 75

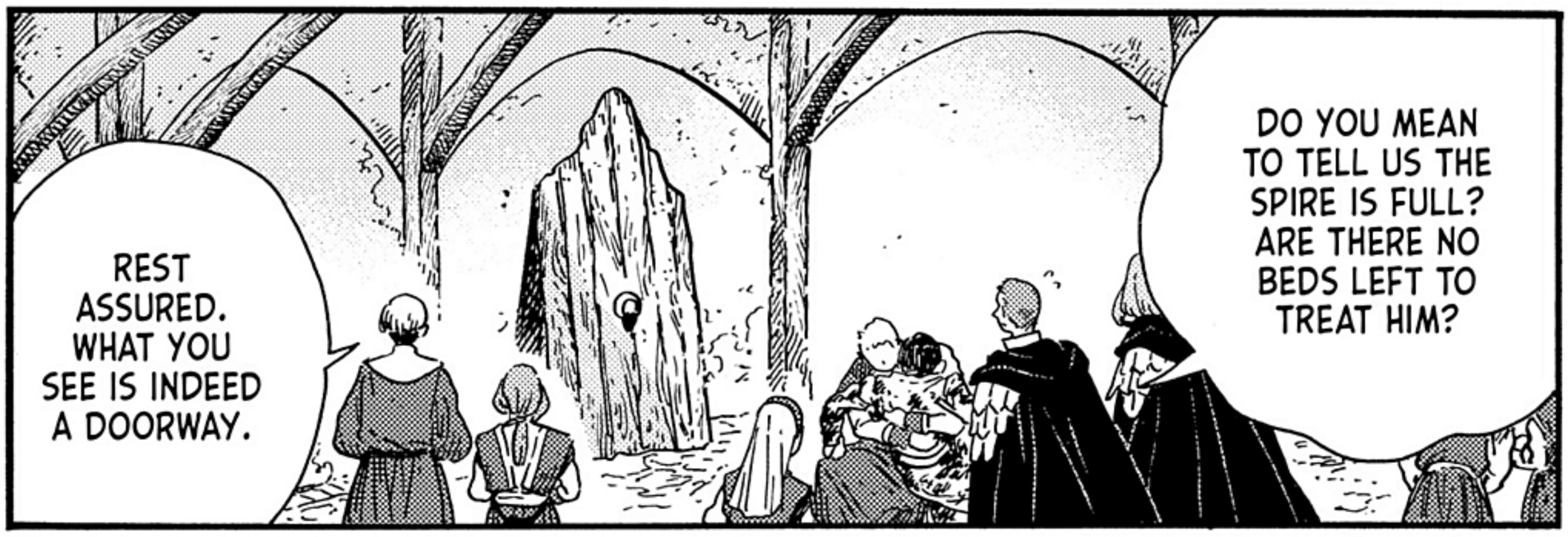

YOU'RE GONNA BE ALL RIGHT!
JUST A LITTLE FARTHER! HANG ON!
THERE IT IS! THE WESTERN SPIRE!

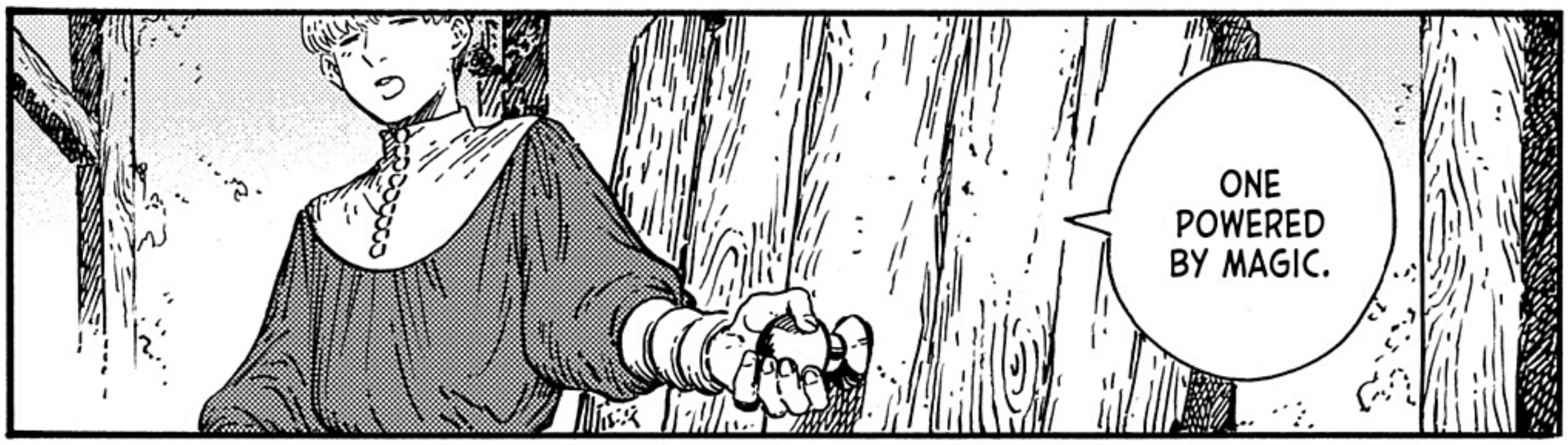

NOD
コクリ
HE NEEDS A TRANSFUSION! CAN YOU HELP HIM?!
WE FOUND HIM TOO WEAK TO STAND... SWARMED BY THE LEECH!
NOW HE'S SLIPPING IN AND OUT OF CONSCIOUSNESS, AND THE BLEEDING STILL HASN'T STOPPED!
DOCTOR! IT'S ONE OF OUR GUARDS-MEN!

BRING HIM TO THE WISE ONE'S DOOR AT ONCE!
THIS WAY!

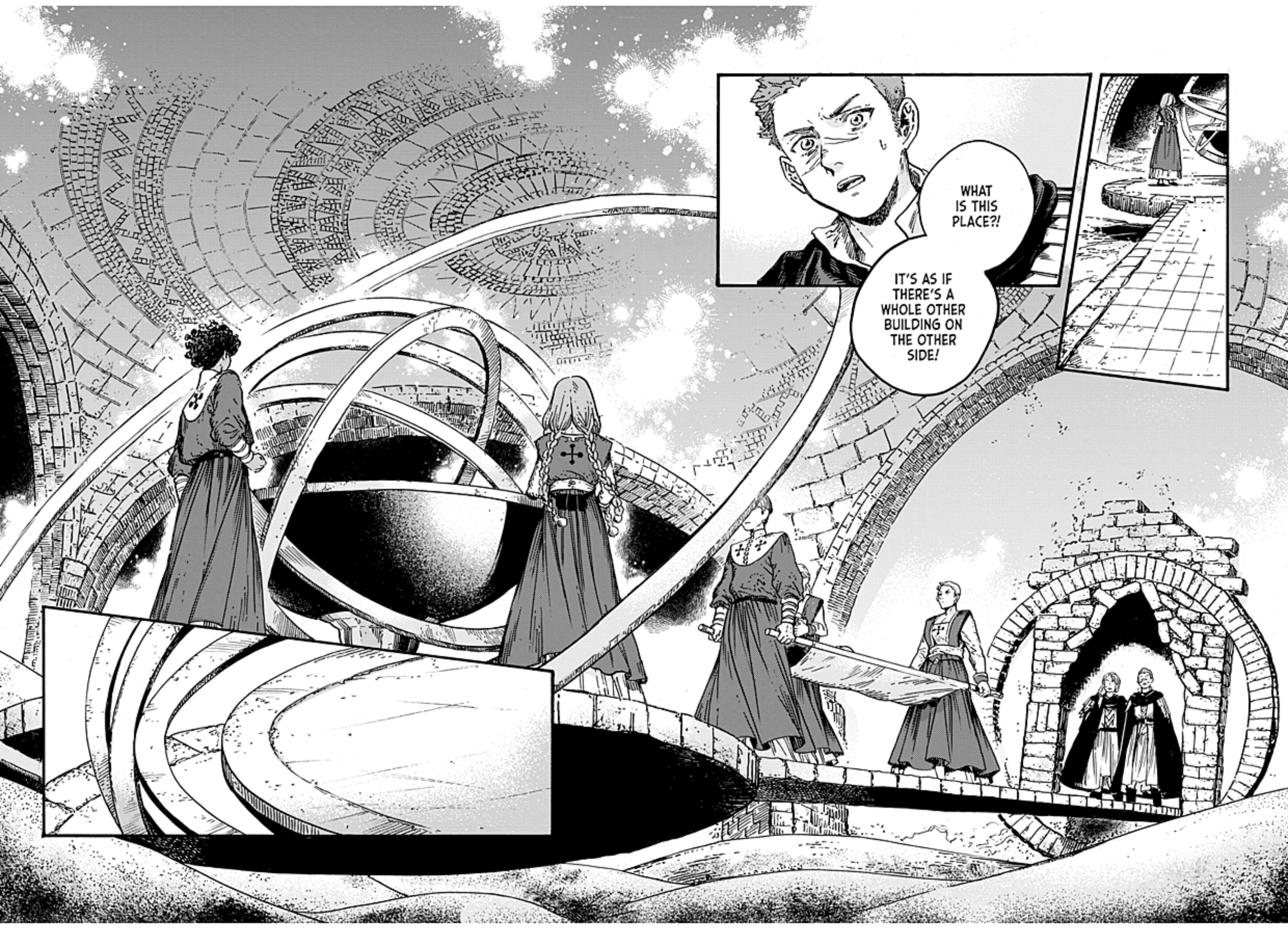
THE WISE ONE'S DOOR...?

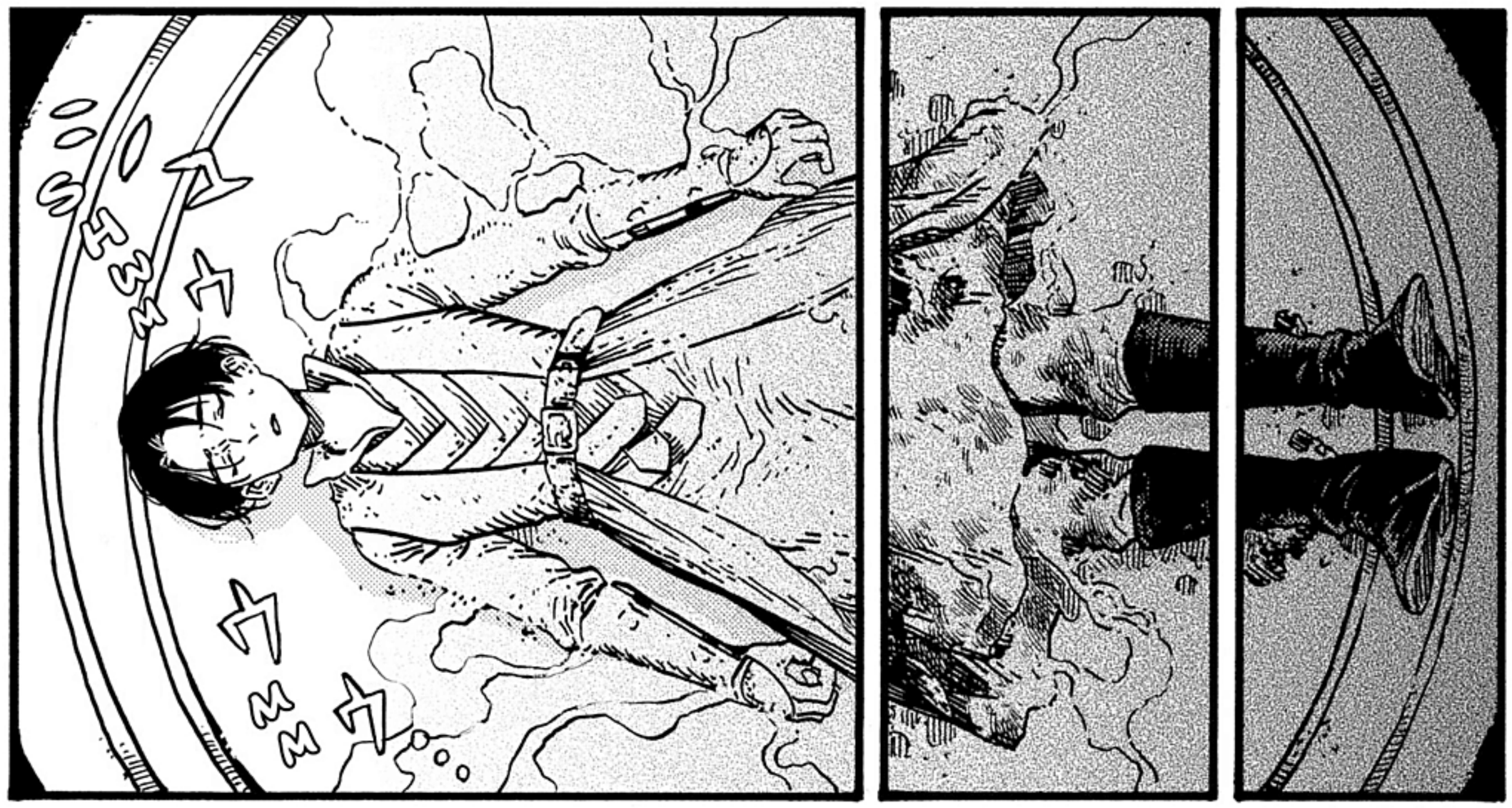



REST ASSURED. WHAT YOU SEE IS INDEED A DOORWAY.
DO YOU MEAN TO TELL US THE SPIRE IS FULL? ARE THERE NO BEDS LEFT TO TREAT HIM?

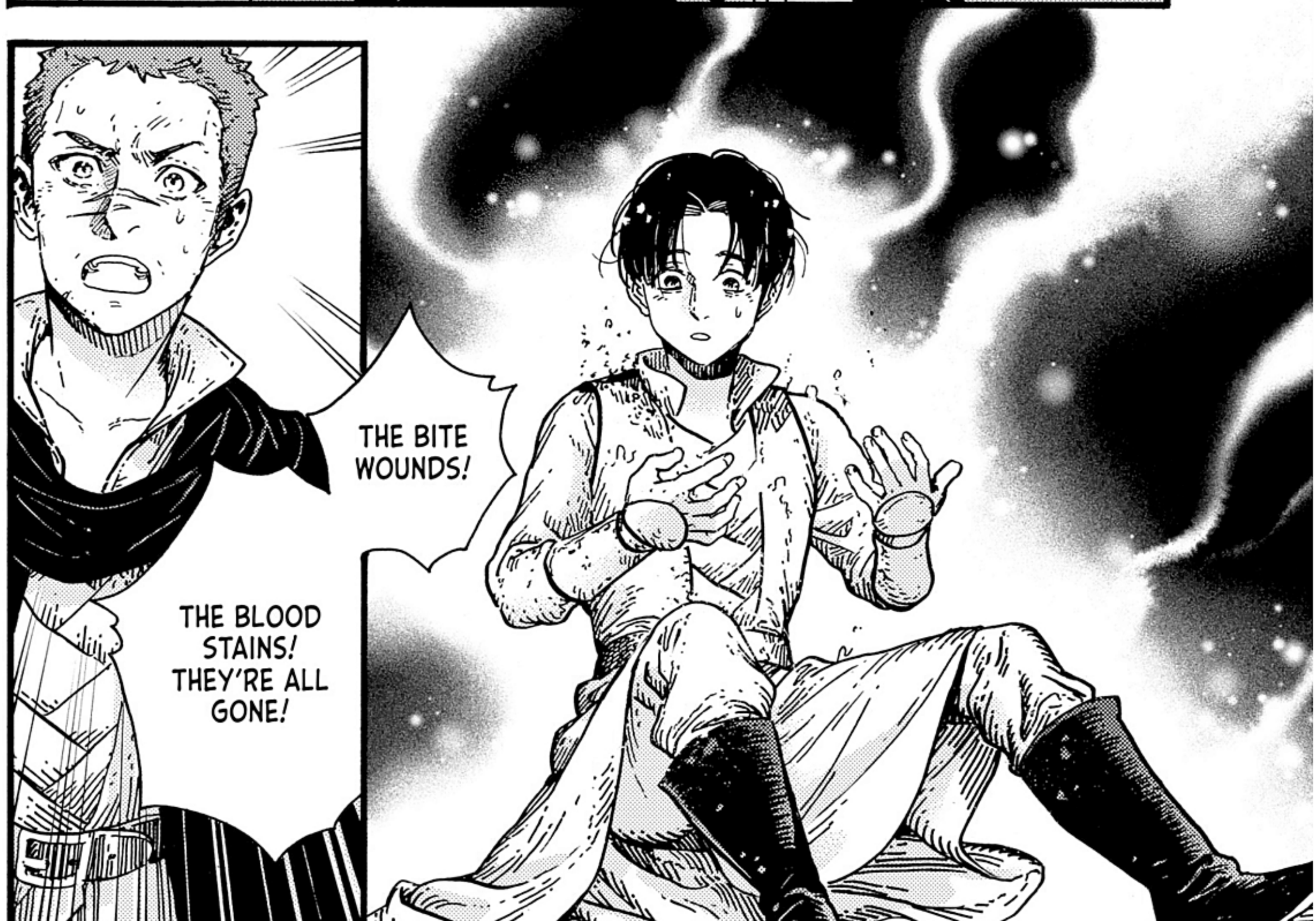

ONE POWERED BY MAGIC.

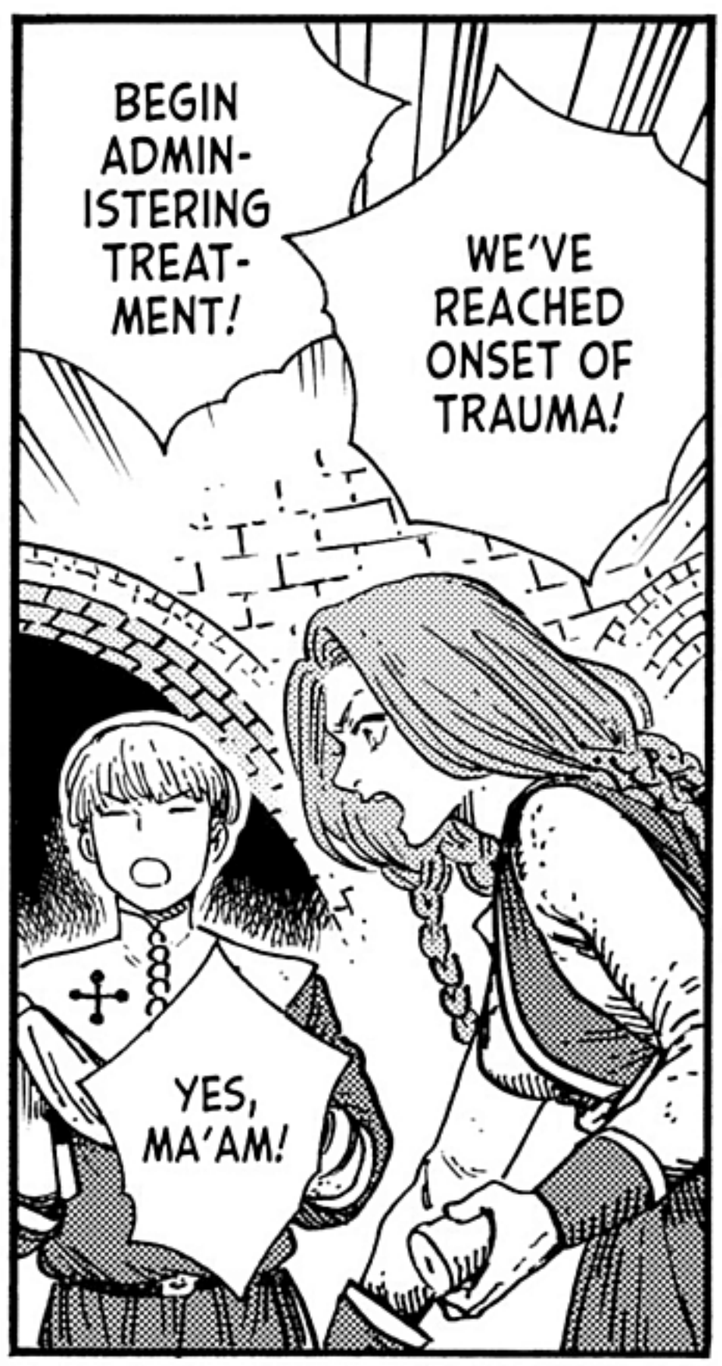
BEHOLD THE MIRACLE BESTOWED UPON US BY THE WISE...
...TO TURN THE TIDE IN OUR FIGHT TO SAVE THIS CITY'S LIVES!
!!


WHAT IS THIS PLACE?!
IT'S AS IF THERE'S A WHOLE OTHER BUILDING ON THE OTHER SIDE!


SHIIIN
MM

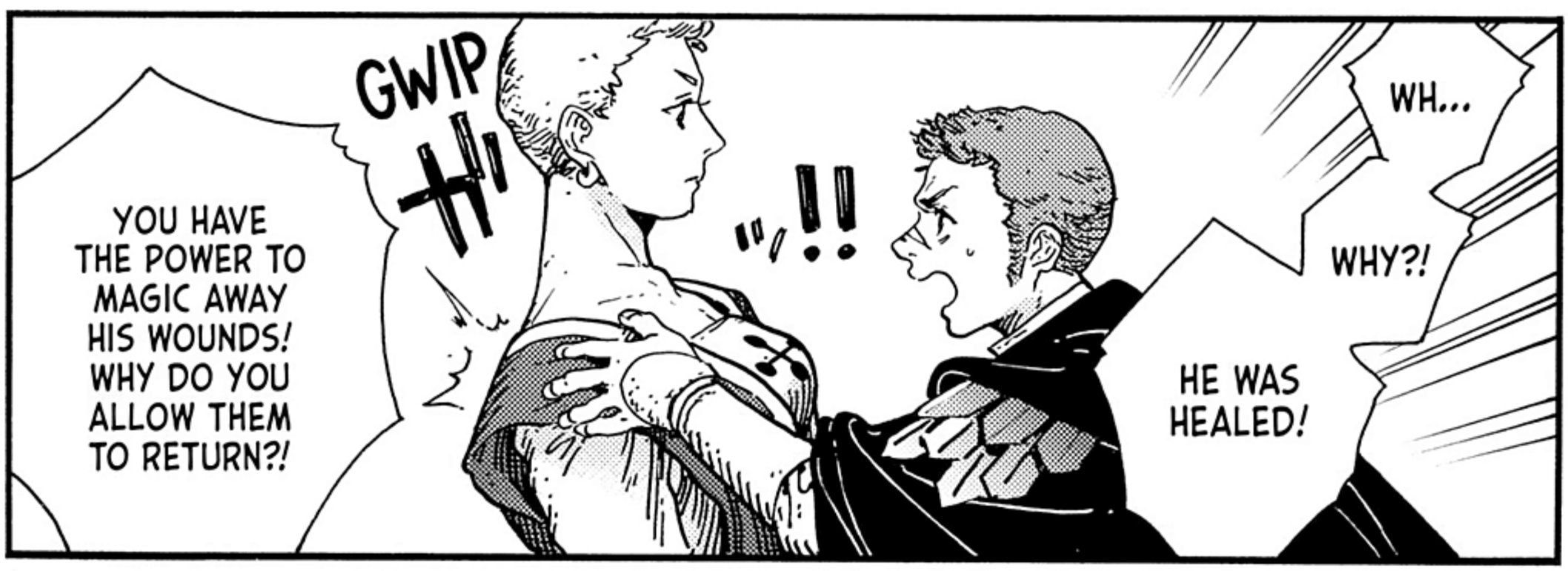
HOW IS THIS POSSIBLE...?
A... ARE YOU SEEING WHAT I'M SEEING...?

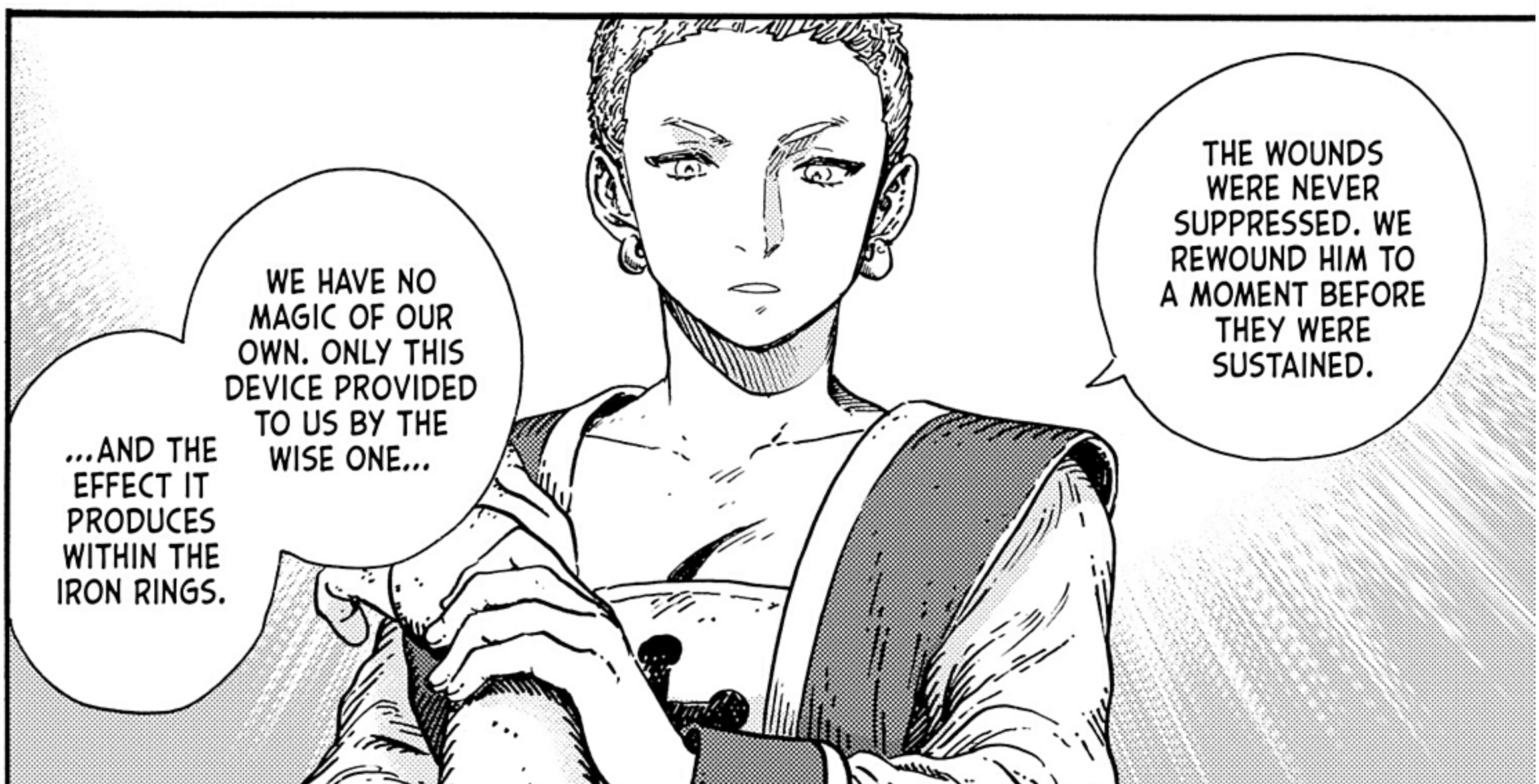

THE BITE WOUNDS!
THE BLOOD STAINS! THEY'RE ALL GONE!

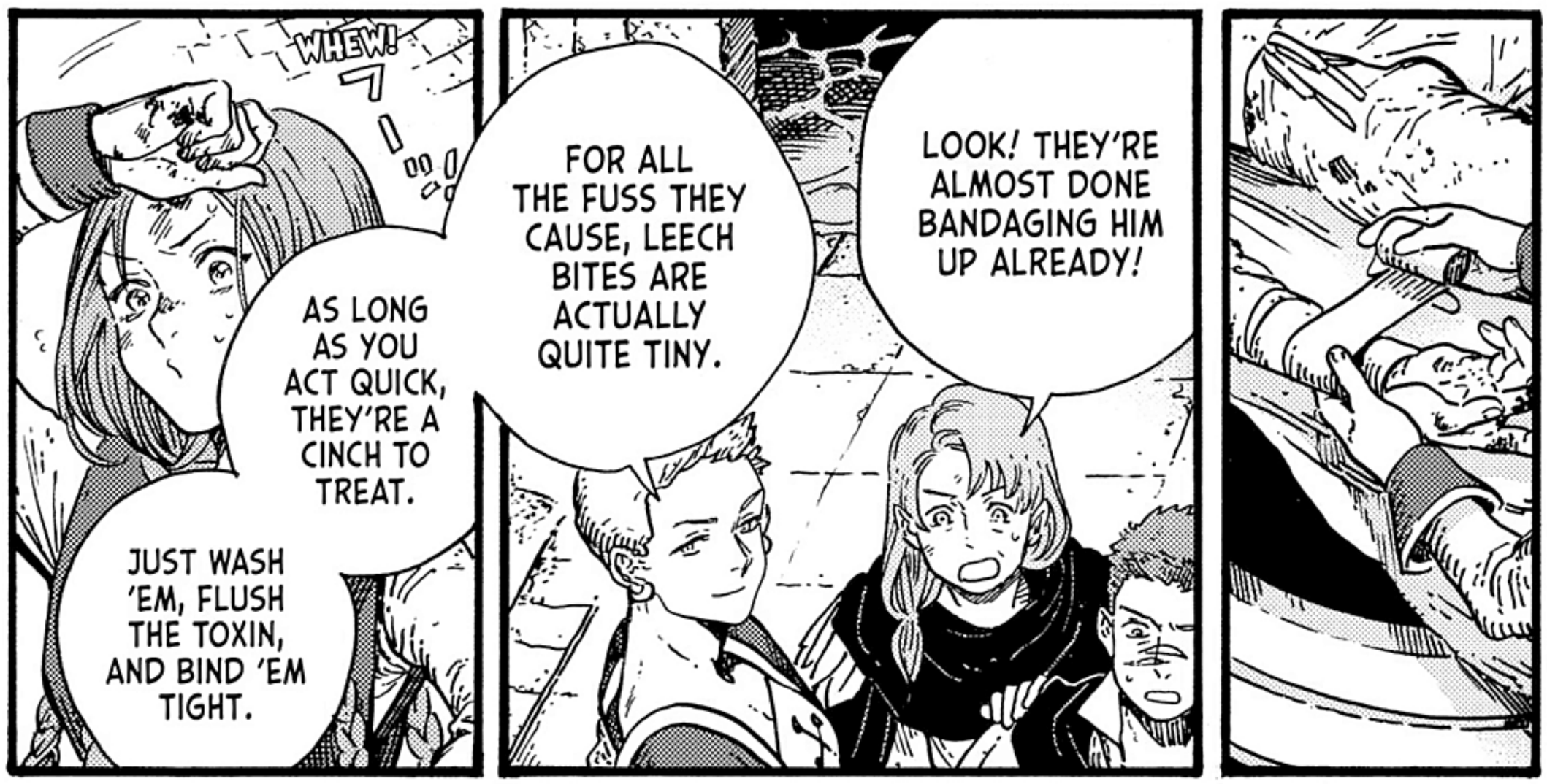

BEGIN ADMIN-ISTERING TREAT-MENT!
WE'VE REACHED ONSET OF TRAUMA!
YES, MA'AM!

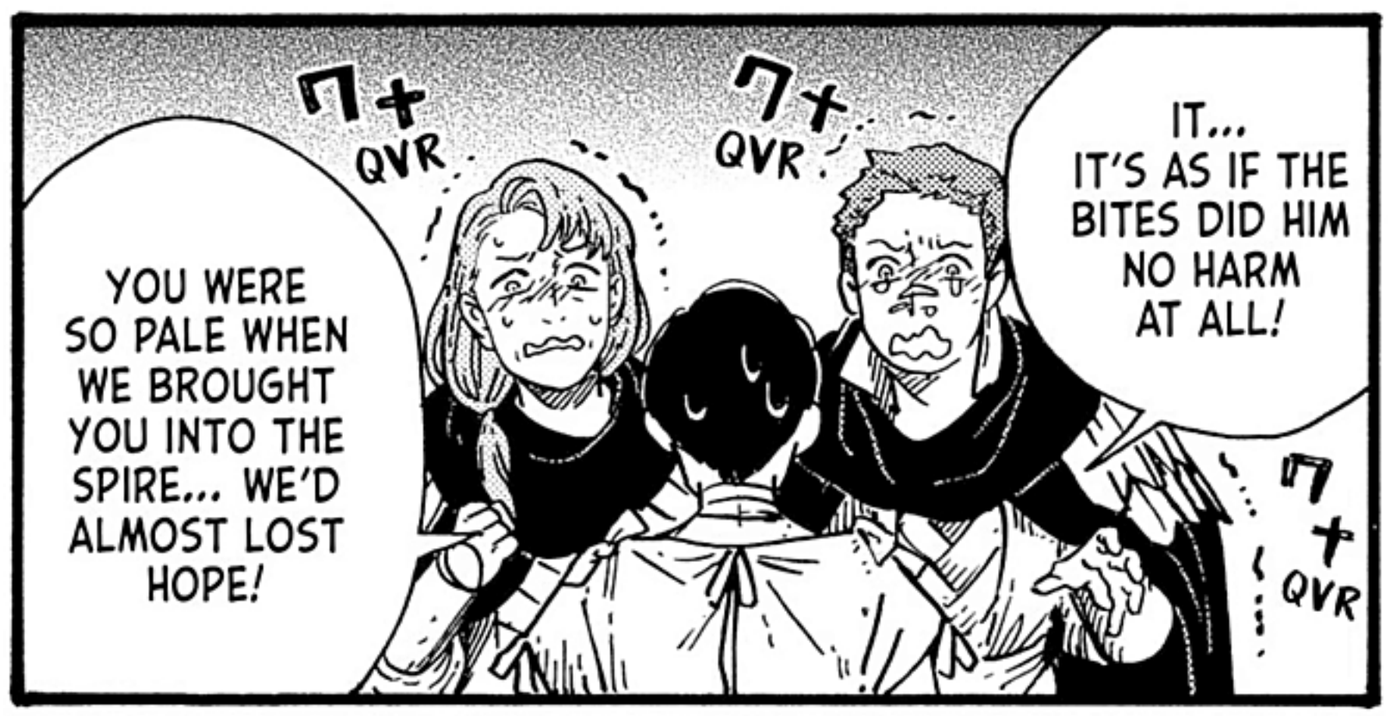
?!

SEEEEP

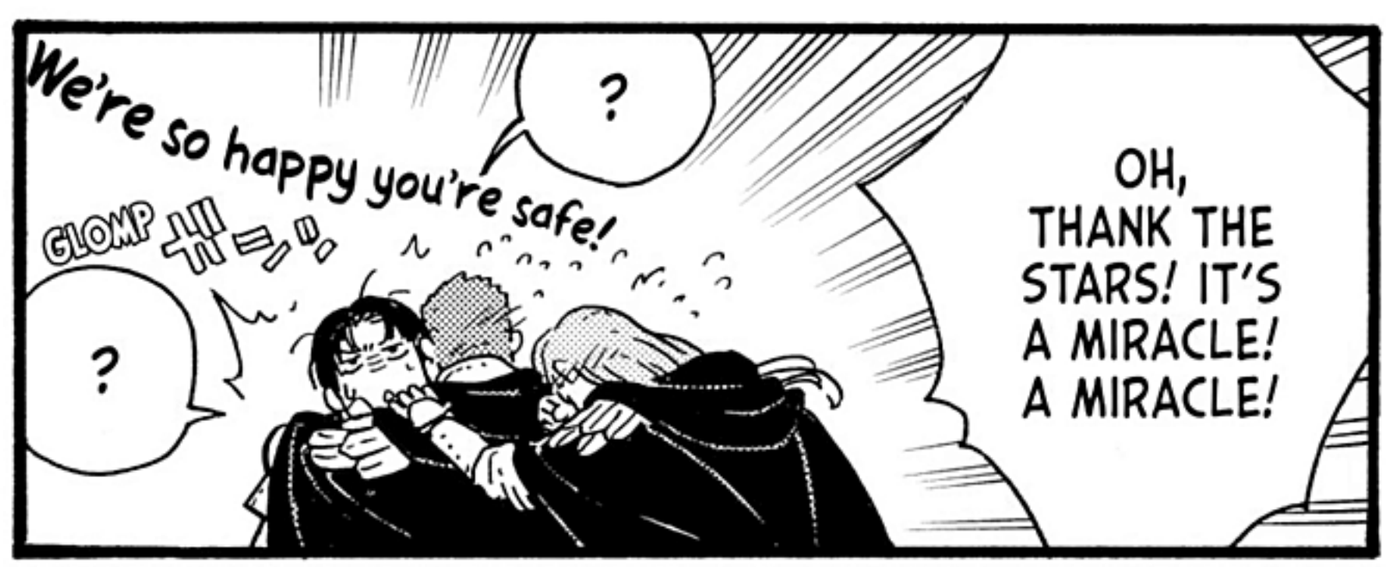

YOU HAVE THE POWER TO MAGIC AWAY HIS WOUNDS! WHY DO YOU ALLOW THEM TO RETURN?!
GWIP
!!
WH...
WHY?!
HE WAS HEALED!

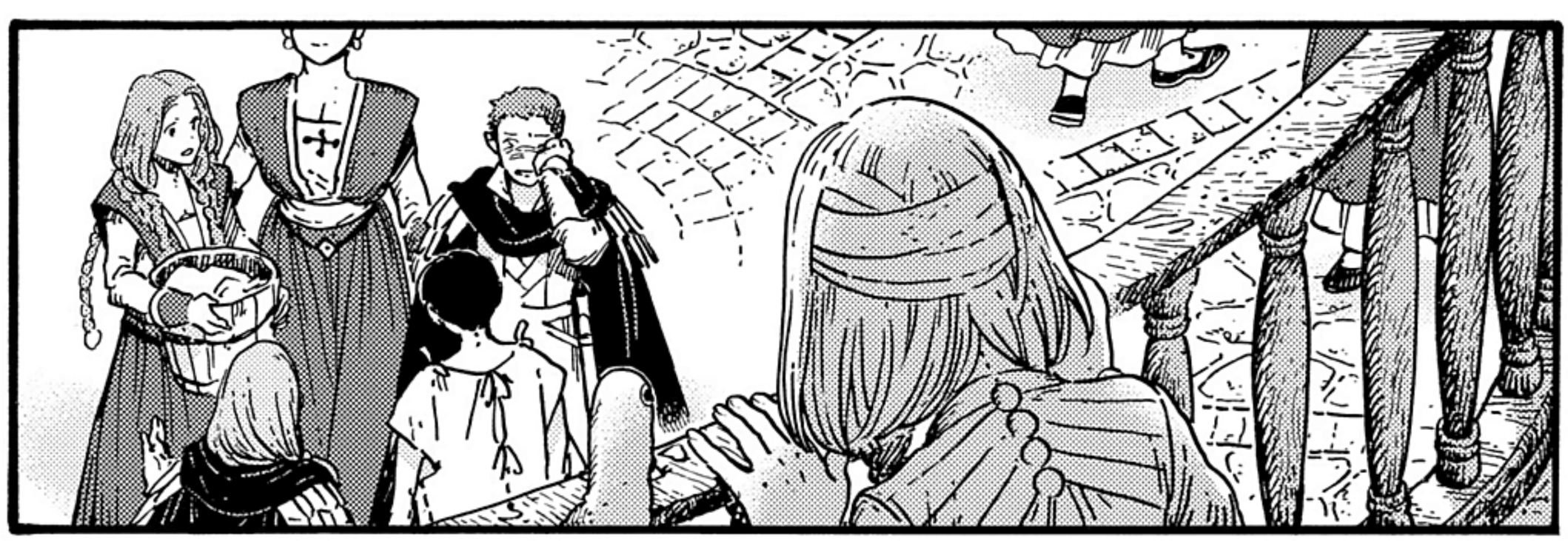

...AND THE EFFECT IT PRODUCES WITHIN THE IRON RINGS.
WE HAVE NO MAGIC OF OUR OWN. ONLY THIS DEVICE PROVIDED TO US BY THE WISE ONE...
THE WOUNDS WERE NEVER SUPPRESSED. WE REWOUND HIM TO A MOMENT BEFORE THEY WERE SUSTAINED.


WHEW!
AS LONG AS YOU ACT QUICK, THEY'RE A CINCH TO TREAT.
JUST WASH 'EM, FLUSH THE TOXIN, AND BIND 'EM TIGHT.
FOR ALL THE FUSS THEY CAUSE, LEECH BITES ARE ACTUALLY QUITE TINY.
LOOK! THEY'RE ALMOST DONE BANDAGING HIM UP ALREADY!


QVR
QVR
QVR
YOU WERE SO PALE WHEN WE BROUGHT YOU INTO THE SPIRE... WE'D ALMOST LOST HOPE!
IT... IT'S AS IF THE BITES DID HIM NO HARM AT ALL!

WHAT HAPPENED ...?
WH...


We're so happy you're safe!
GLOMP
?
?
OH, THANK THE STARS! IT'S A MIRACLE! A MIRACLE!

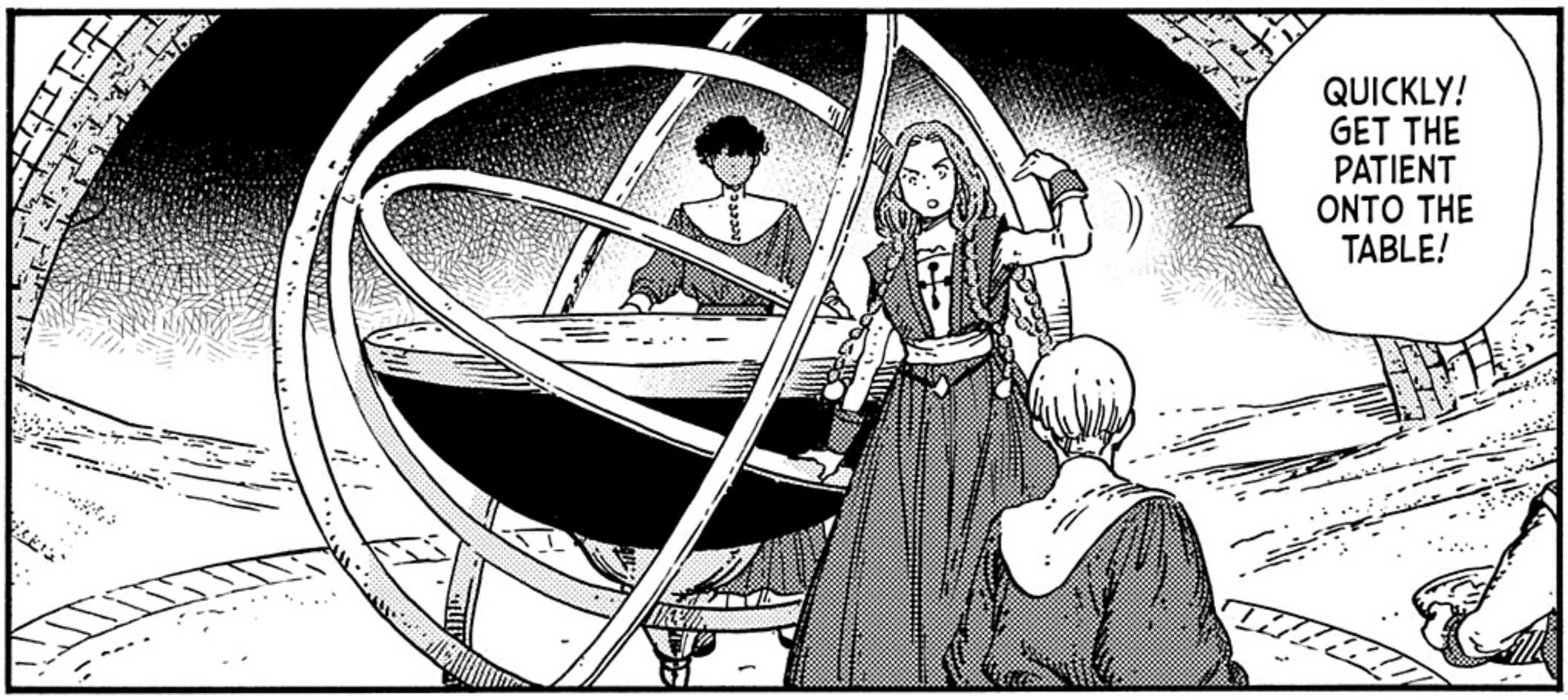


WOW...

LORD BELDARUIT'S NEW CREATION IS INCREDIBLE...

IT'S AN ENCHANTED EMERGENCY ROOM...

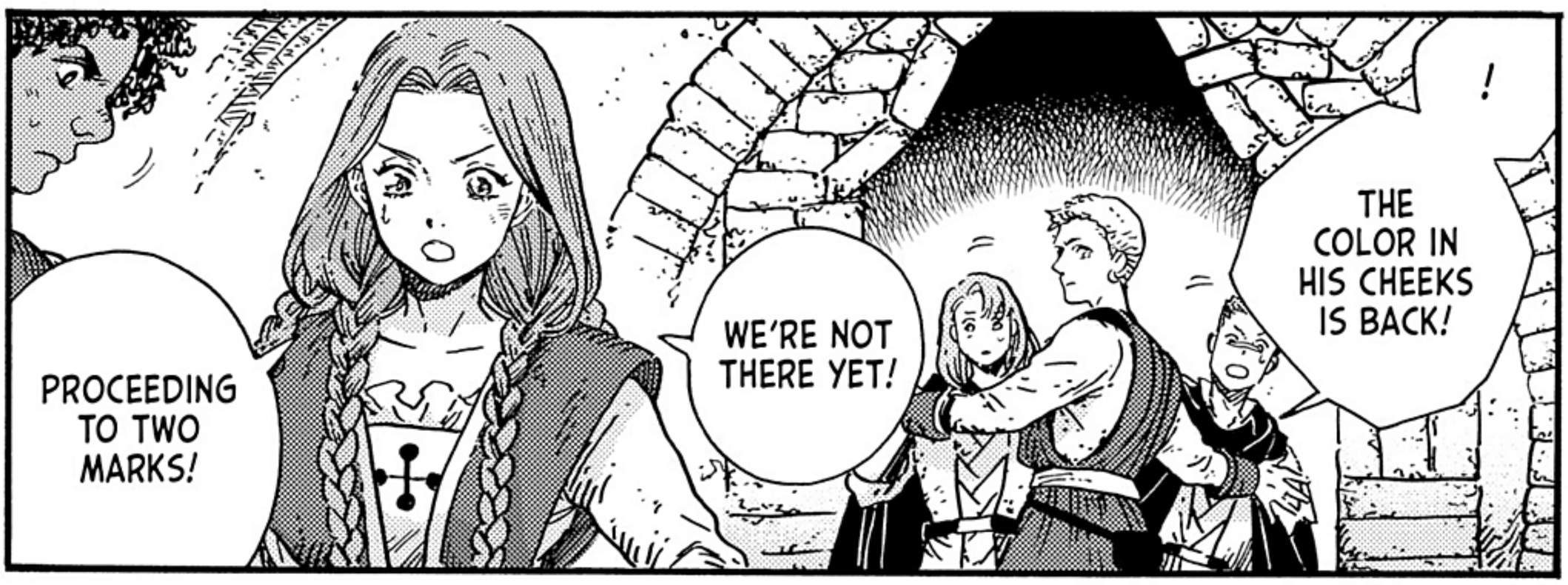
...COMPLETE WITH AN OPERATING TABLE ABLE TO TURN BACK TIME FOR THE PATIENT BEING TREATED!


QUICKLY! GET THE PATIENT ONTO THE TABLE!

きょろ GLANCE
きょろ GLANCE
IT'S ALL RIGHT. STEP BACK.
WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO TO HIM?
WH... WHAT IS THAT THING?

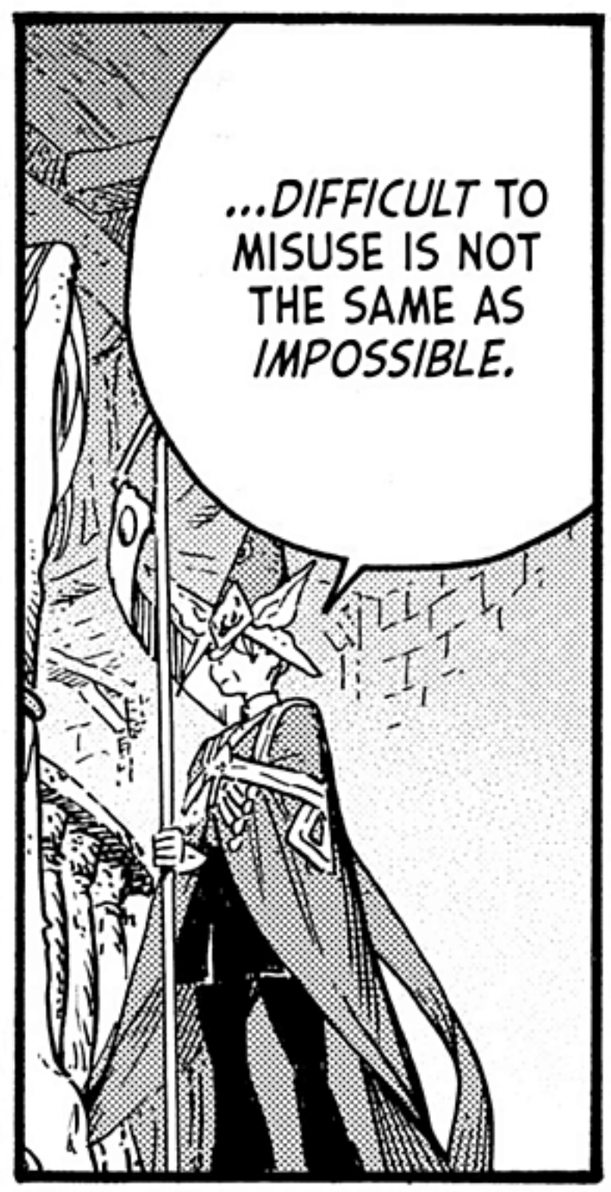
ガコッ!
KA-KLUNK

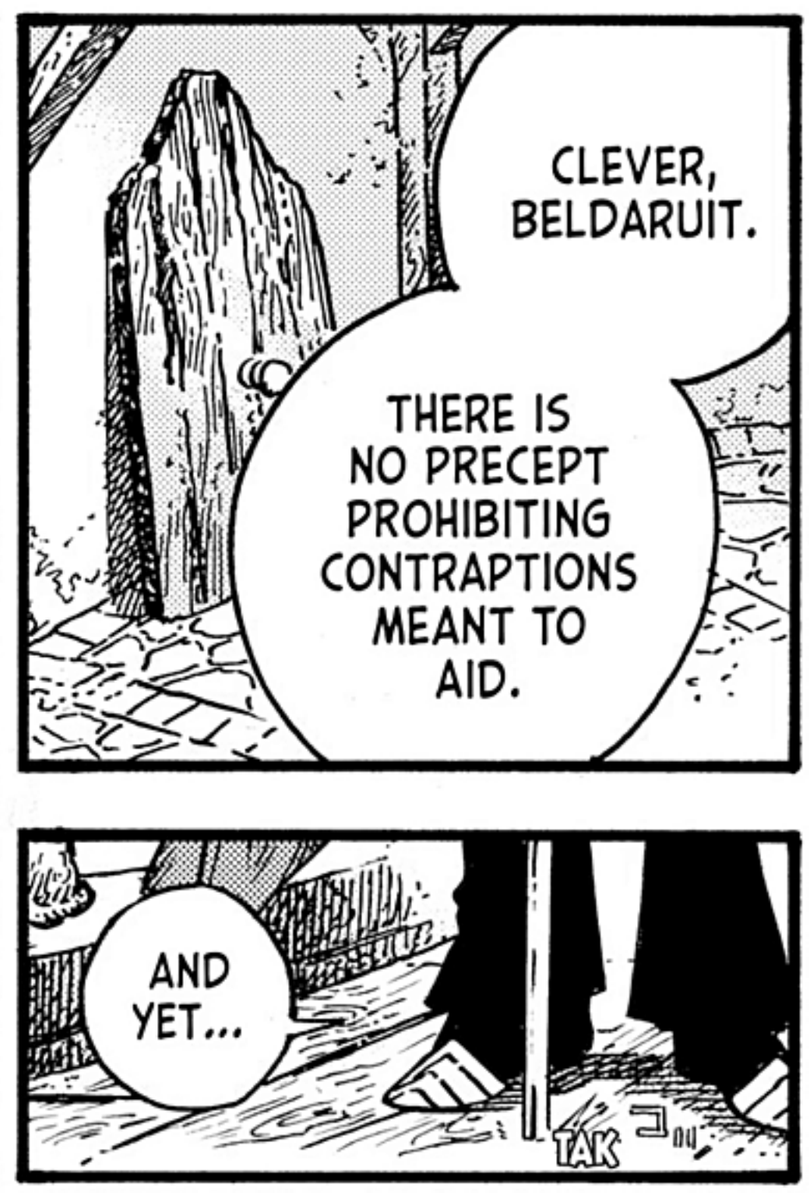
SETTING RETROGRADE TO ONE CLOCK MARK!
グッ
KRRNK

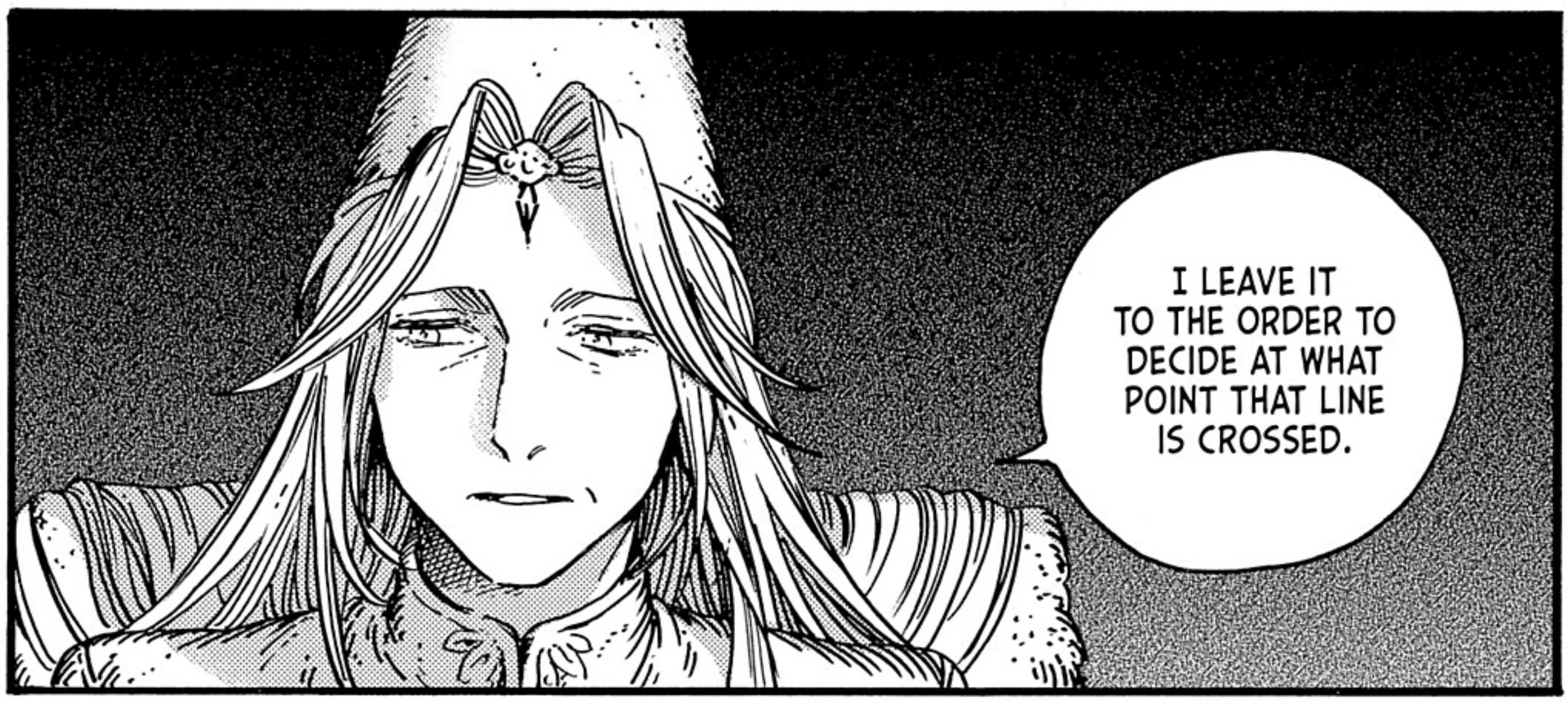

PROCEEDING TO TWO MARKS!
WE'RE NOT THERE YET!
THE COLOR IN HIS CHEEKS IS BACK!
!

IT SHALL REMAIN HERE, LINKED TO THE HEALING SPIRE...
...FOREFRONT OF THE NOBLEST CAUSE OF ALL, WHERE VIRTUE, ARDOR, AND CONVICTION CONVERGE.
INSTEAD OF HAVING TO JUSTIFY THE USE OF A SPELL TO HEAL...
...WE'LL BE DEFENDING A DEVICE PROVIDED TO DOCTORS TO ASSIST IN THEIR DUTIES.
HMPH. A CONTRAPTION THAT CANNOT BE CARRIED OR TRANSPORTED.

SHOULD IT EVER BE EMPLOYED FOR FOUL PURPOSE, SEAL THE ROOM.


...DIFFICULT TO MISUSE IS NOT THE SAME AS IMPOSSIBLE.


CLEVER, BELDARUIT.
THERE IS NO PRECEPT PROHIBITING CONTRAPTIONS MEANT TO AID.
AND YET...
TAK


I LEAVE IT TO THE ORDER TO DECIDE AT WHAT POINT THAT LINE IS CROSSED.

AHH... SO THAT'S WHAT IT BOILS DOWN TO, IS IT?
VERY CLEVER, INDEED.
THAP
FWIK

FWRSH

TH... THERE YOU ARE!

DO THE TWO OF YOU TRULY INTEND TO GO THROUGH WITH THIS?!

SPEAK!

THRMP

THRMP

THRMP

LORD BELDARUIT! LORD VINANNA! I DEMAND TO KNOW! HOW DID IT COME ABOUT?!

WHAT TOOK YOU SO LONG, O WISE ONE?

AT LAST, THE WISE IN FRIENDSHIPS JOINS US.

TEARS OF JOY 感涙

...THE MOST *WONDERFUL* INVENTION I'VE EVER LAID EYES ON!

BECAUSE THIS...

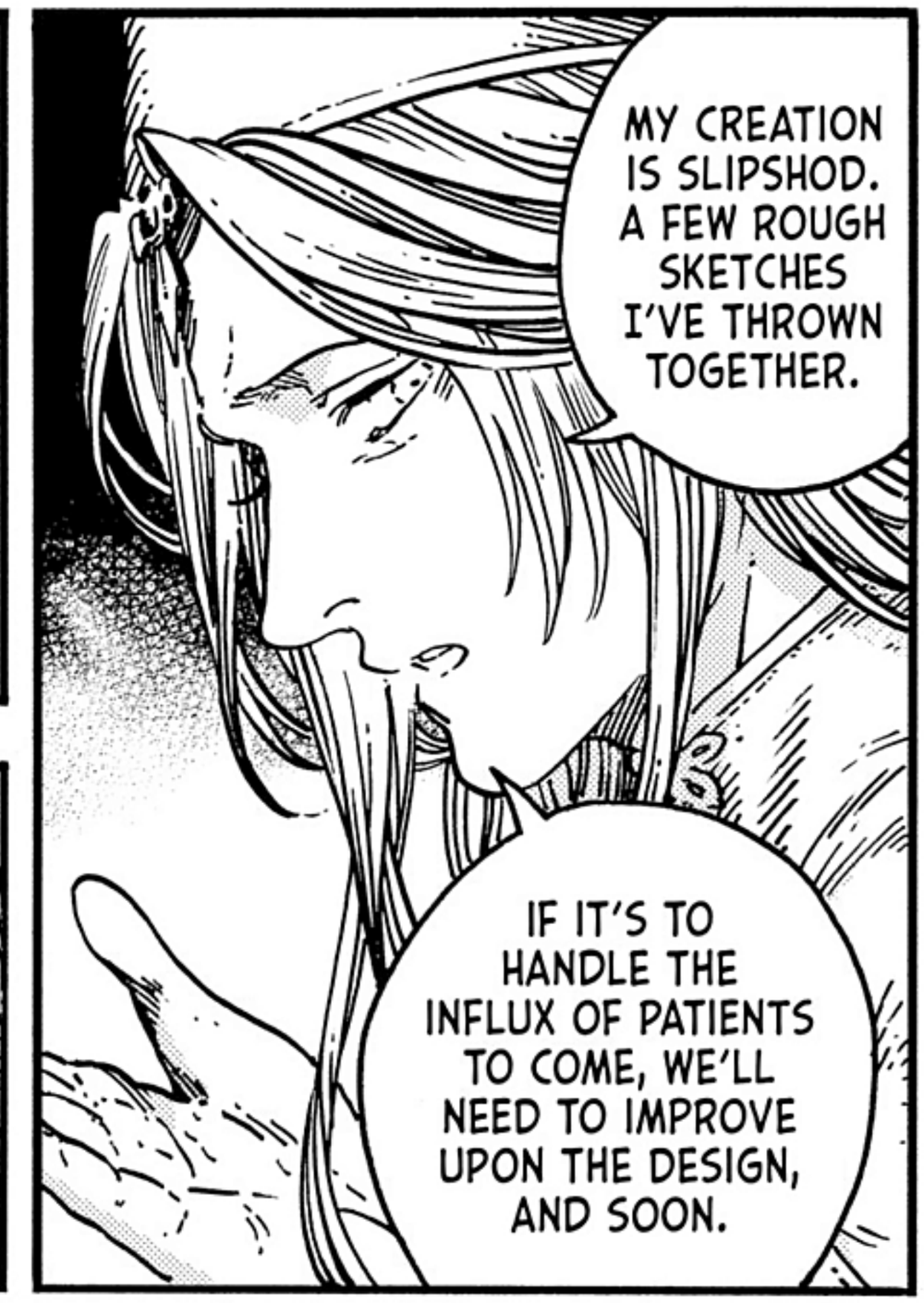
QVR

QVR

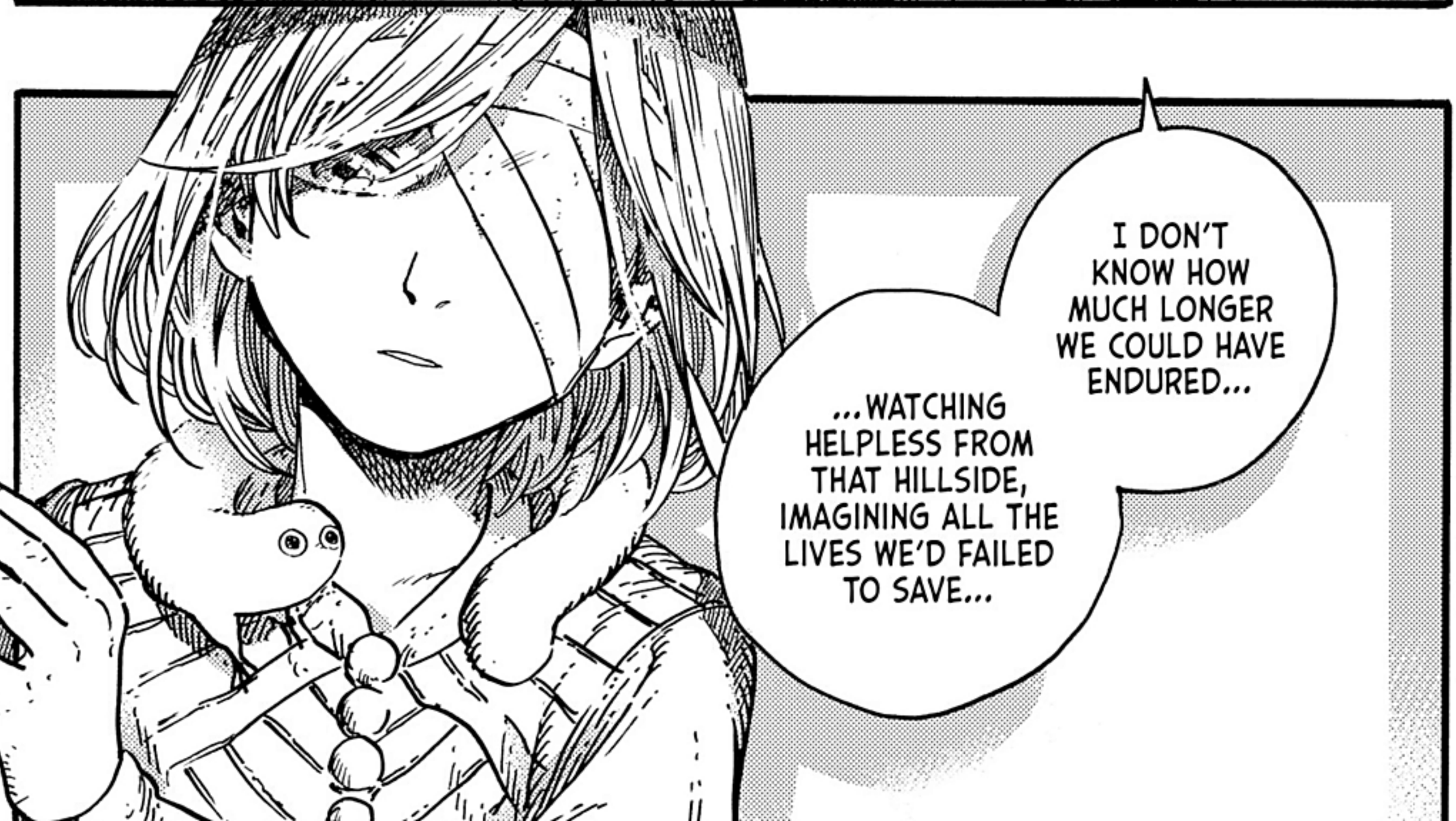
...MAY VERY WELL BE...

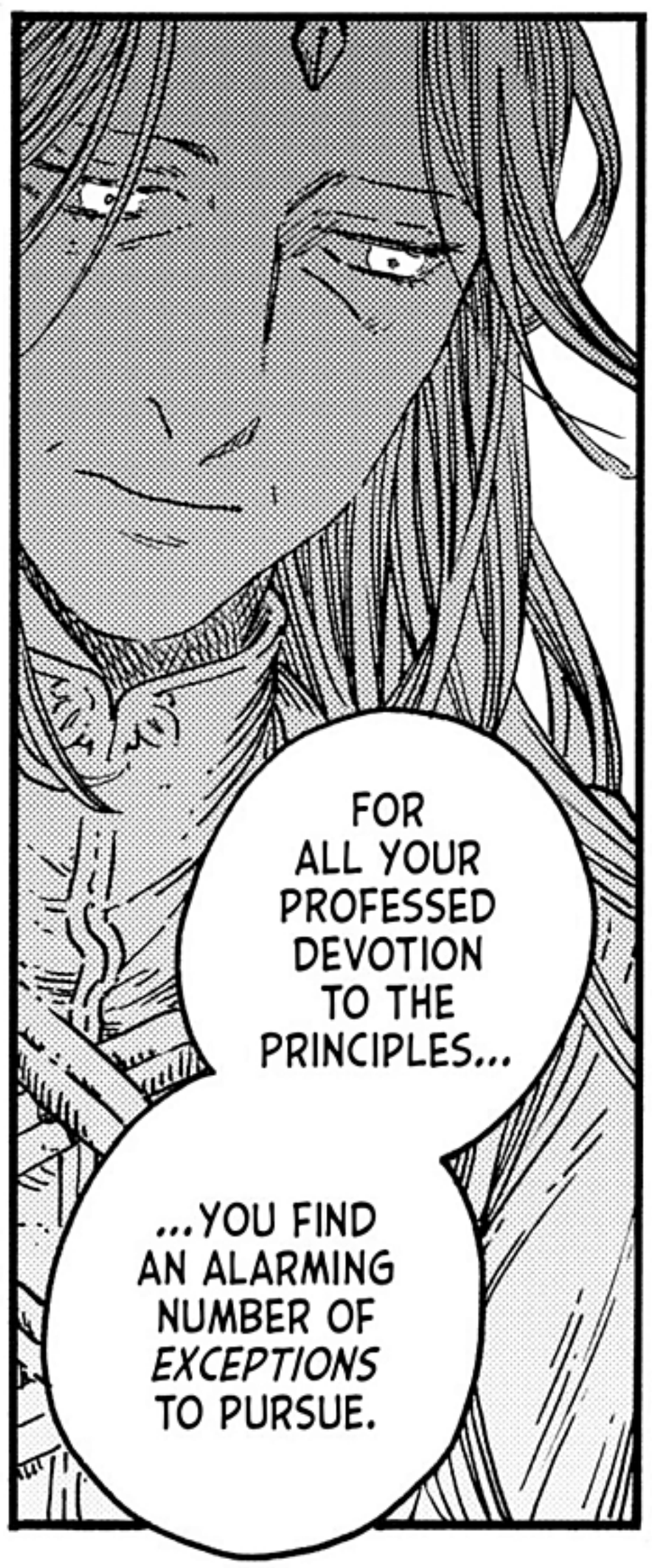
IT'S BEEN SO DISHEARTENING FOR THOSE OF US AT THE EVACUATION SITE...
...SITTING IDLE IN RELATIVE SAFETY...
...FEELING THERE MUST BE MORE WE CAN DO, BUT NOT KNOWING *WHAT.*
GWIP
...BUT BECAUSE WE ARE *PEOPLE* WITH CONCERN AND COMPASSION!
WE WANT TO HELP OTHERS WITH OUR SPELLS!
CALM YOURSELF, LAGRAH. THE BATTLE IS NOT YET WON.
SNRFF
NOT SIMPLY BECAUSE WE ARE WITCHES AND THAT IS WHAT WITCHES DO...
WE WANT TO MAKE OURSELVES USEFUL!

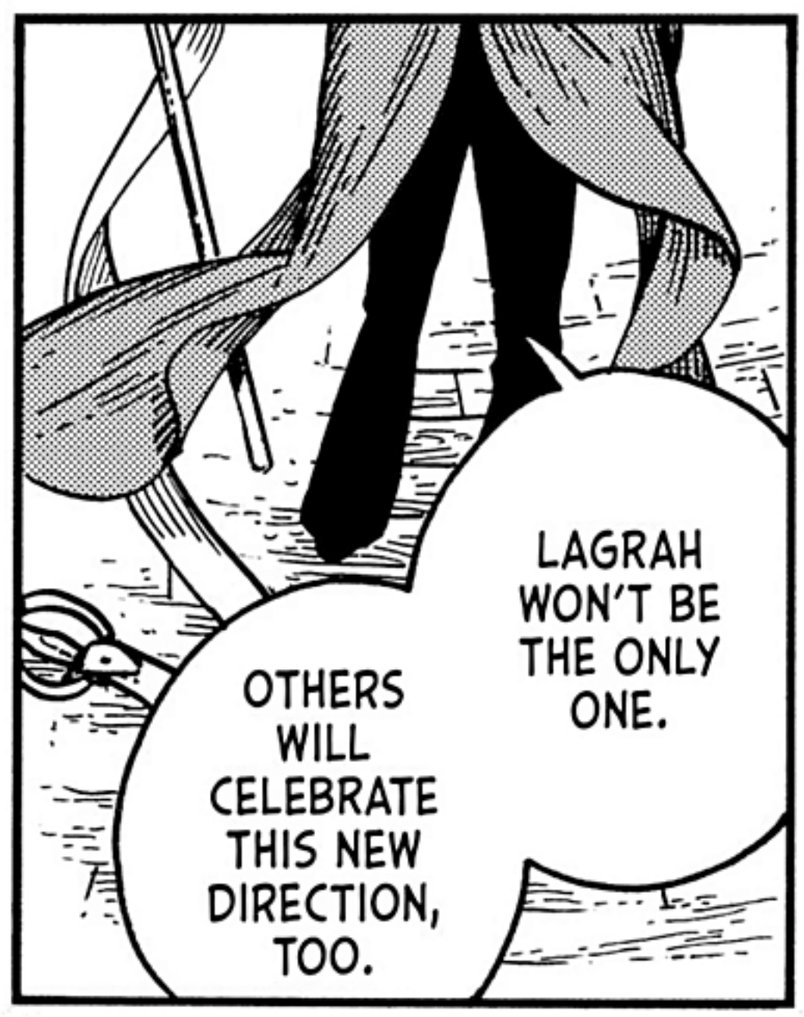
LET US START AT ONCE!
I'LL BRING SEVERAL OF OUR BEST CASTERS FROM THE EVACUATION SITE TO JOIN US!
TMP
TMP


MY CREATION IS SLIPSHOD. A FEW ROUGH SKETCHES I'VE THROWN TOGETHER.
IF IT'S TO HANDLE THE INFLUX OF PATIENTS TO COME, WE'LL NEED TO IMPROVE UPON THE DESIGN, AND SOON.

THANK THE STARS!
THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT WE NEEDED.

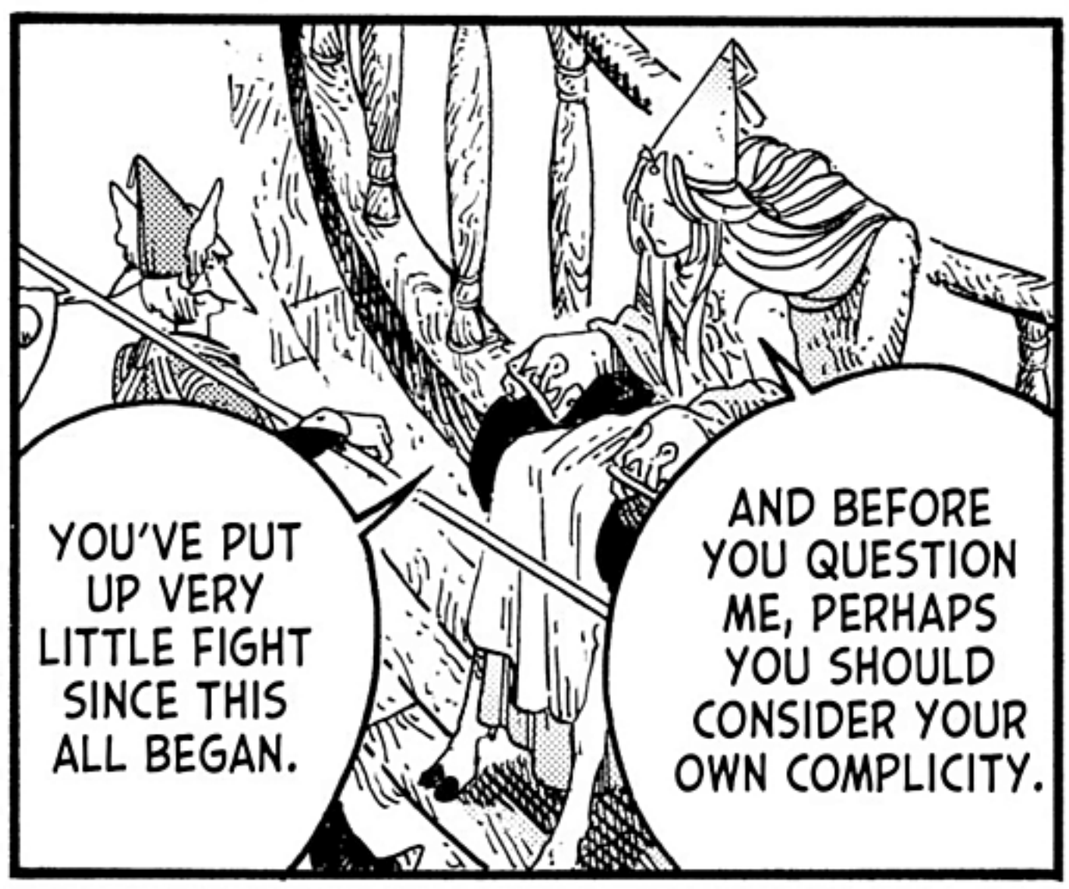

I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH LONGER WE COULD HAVE ENDURED...
...WATCHING HELPLESS FROM THAT HILLSIDE, IMAGINING ALL THE LIVES WE'D FAILED TO SAVE...


FOR ALL YOUR PROFESSED DEVOTION TO THE PRINCIPLES...
...YOU FIND AN ALARMING NUMBER OF *EXCEPTIONS* TO PURSUE.

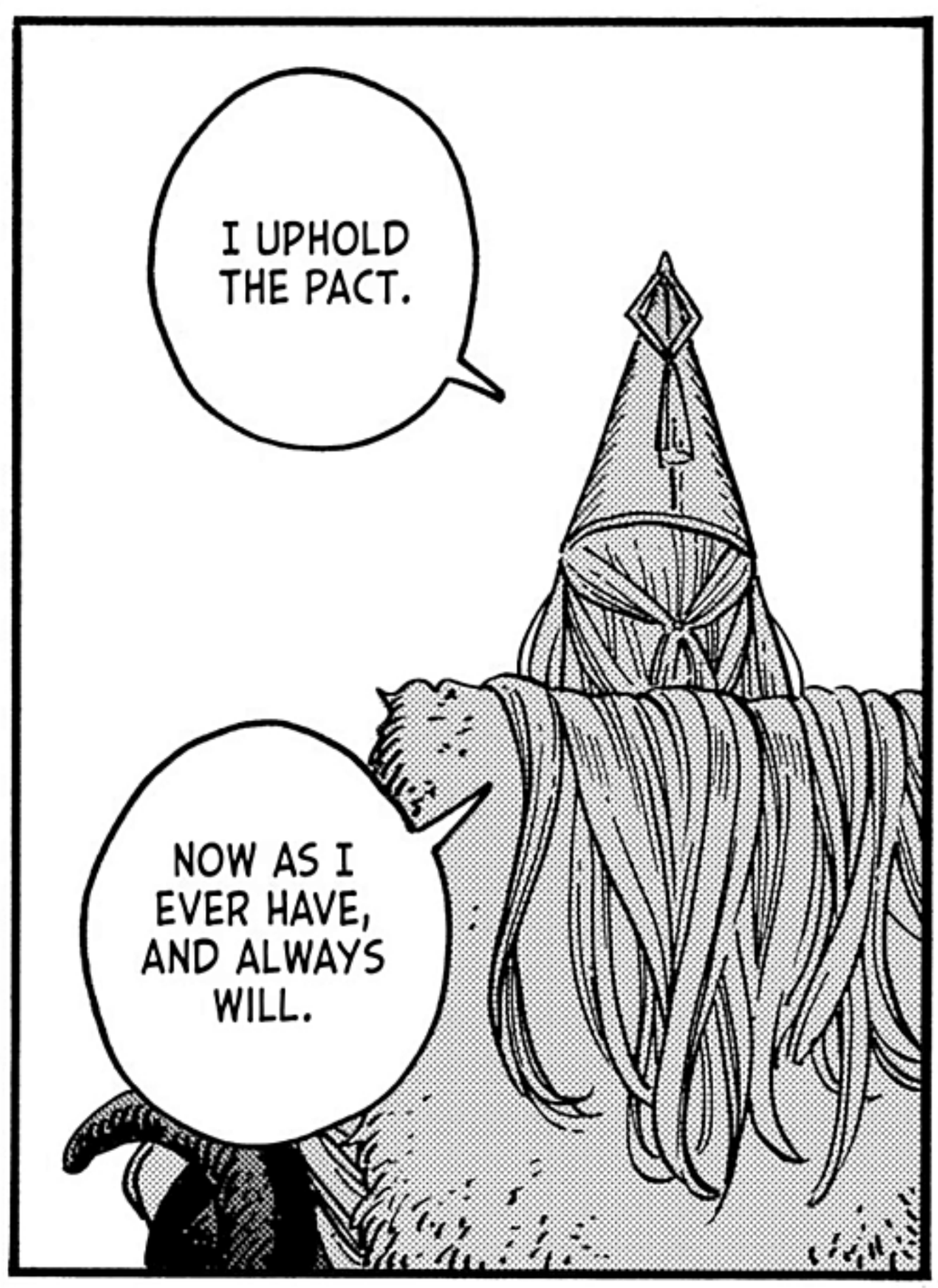

OTHERS WILL CELEBRATE THIS NEW DIRECTION, TOO.
LAGRAH WON'T BE THE ONLY ONE.

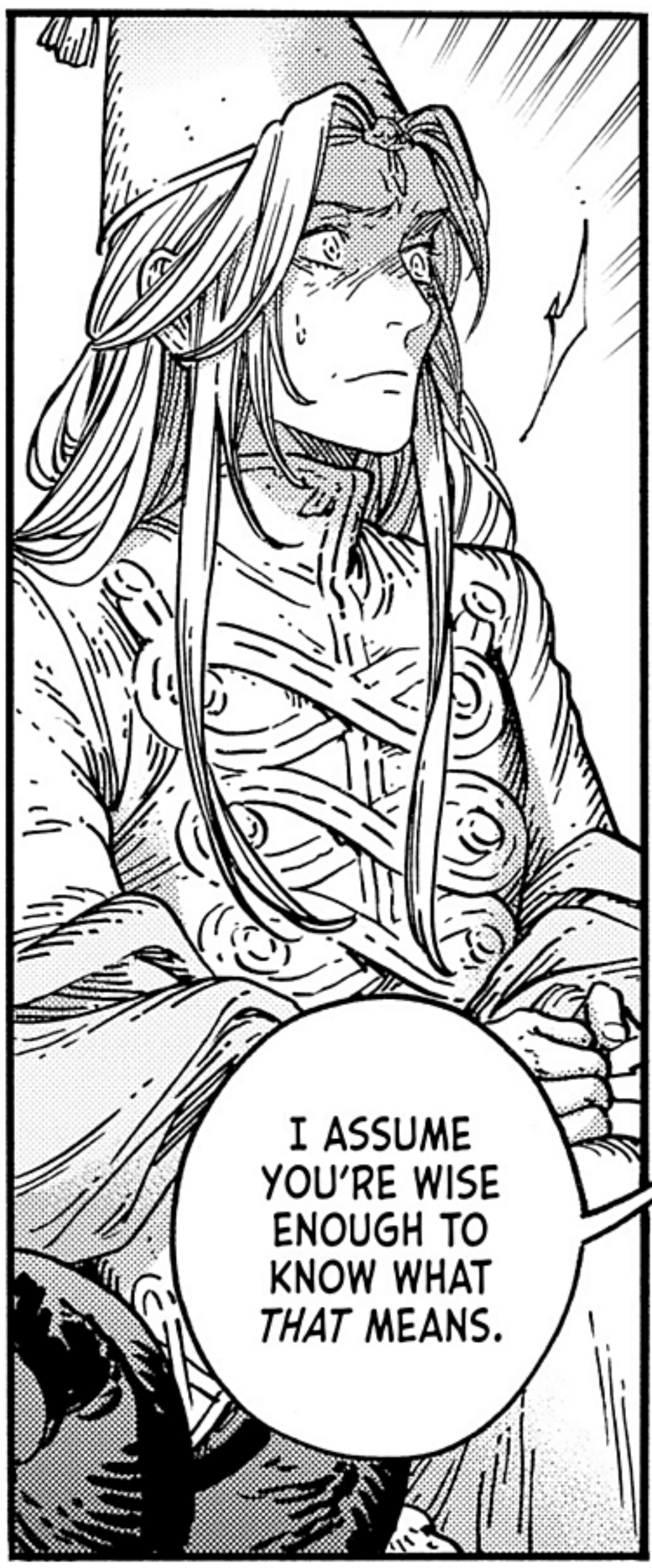
...

MUCH AS YOU DO, BELDARUIT.


YOU'VE PUT UP VERY LITTLE FIGHT SINCE THIS ALL BEGAN.
AND BEFORE YOU QUESTION ME, PERHAPS YOU SHOULD CONSIDER YOUR OWN COMPLICITY.

...

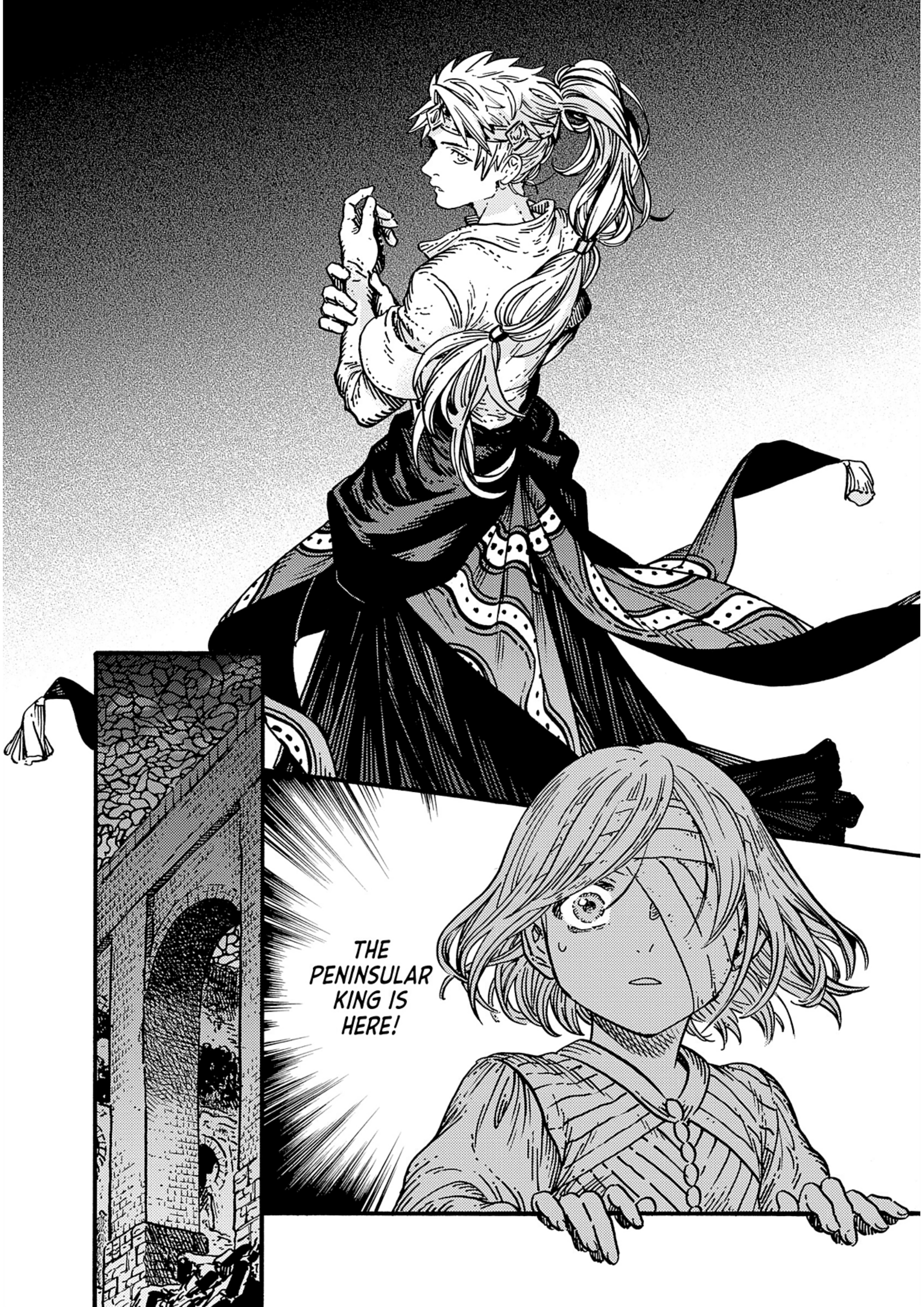

I UPHOLD THE PACT.
NOW AS I EVER HAVE, AND ALWAYS WILL.


I ASSUME YOU'RE WISE ENOUGH TO KNOW WHAT *THAT* MEANS.

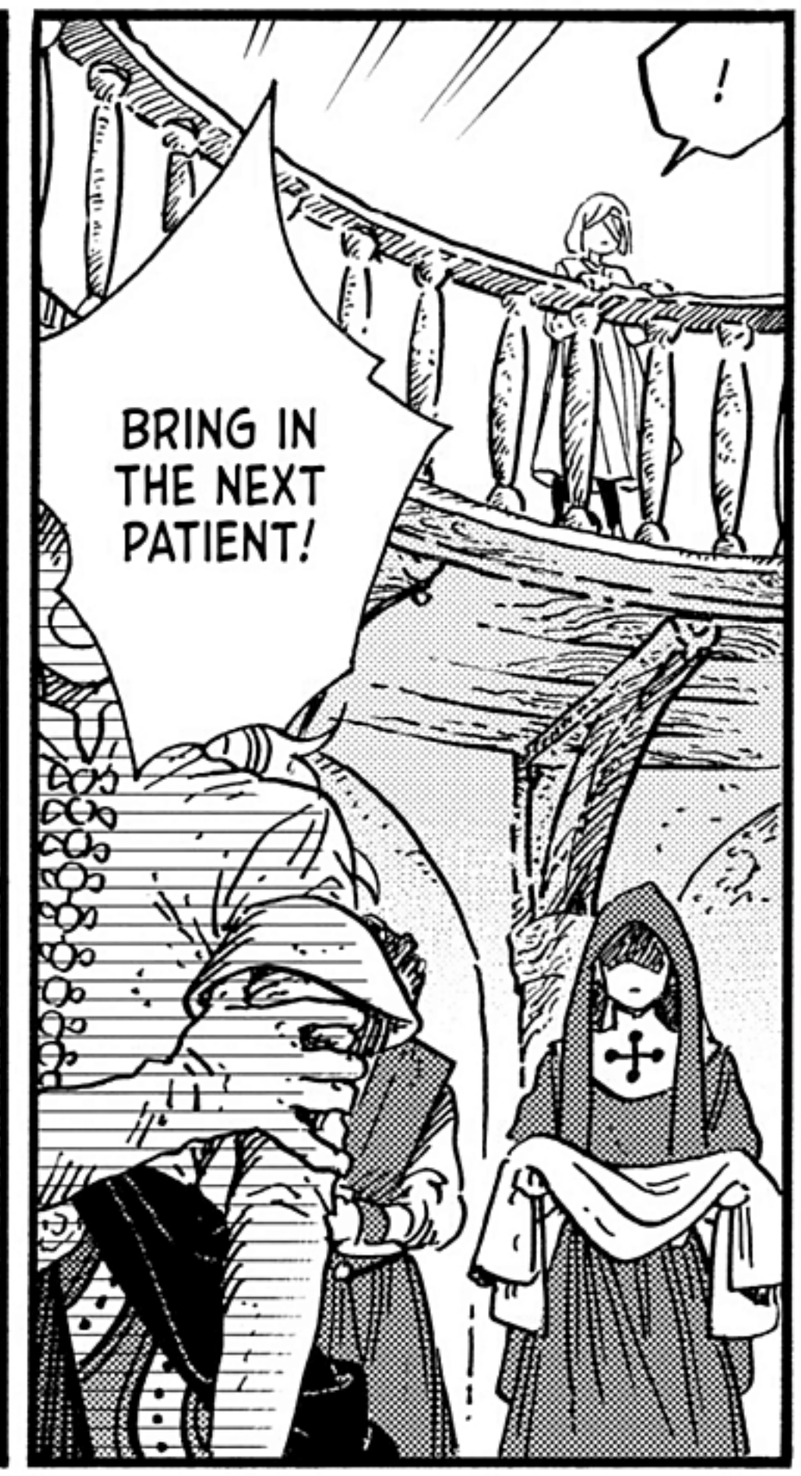
A WIND IS BLOWING.
A SUDDEN, BITTER COLD SWIRLING HIGH ABOVE THE CITY.

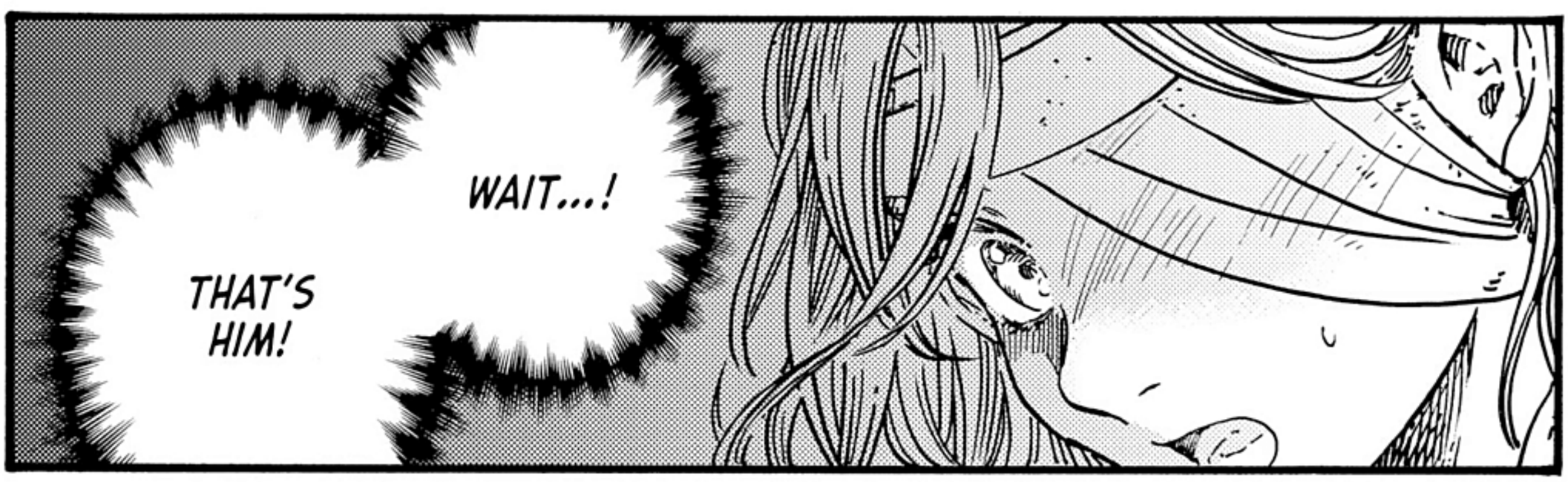
AS TO WHETHER IT PLAYS OUT IN OUR FAVOR...
...WE'LL JUST HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE.

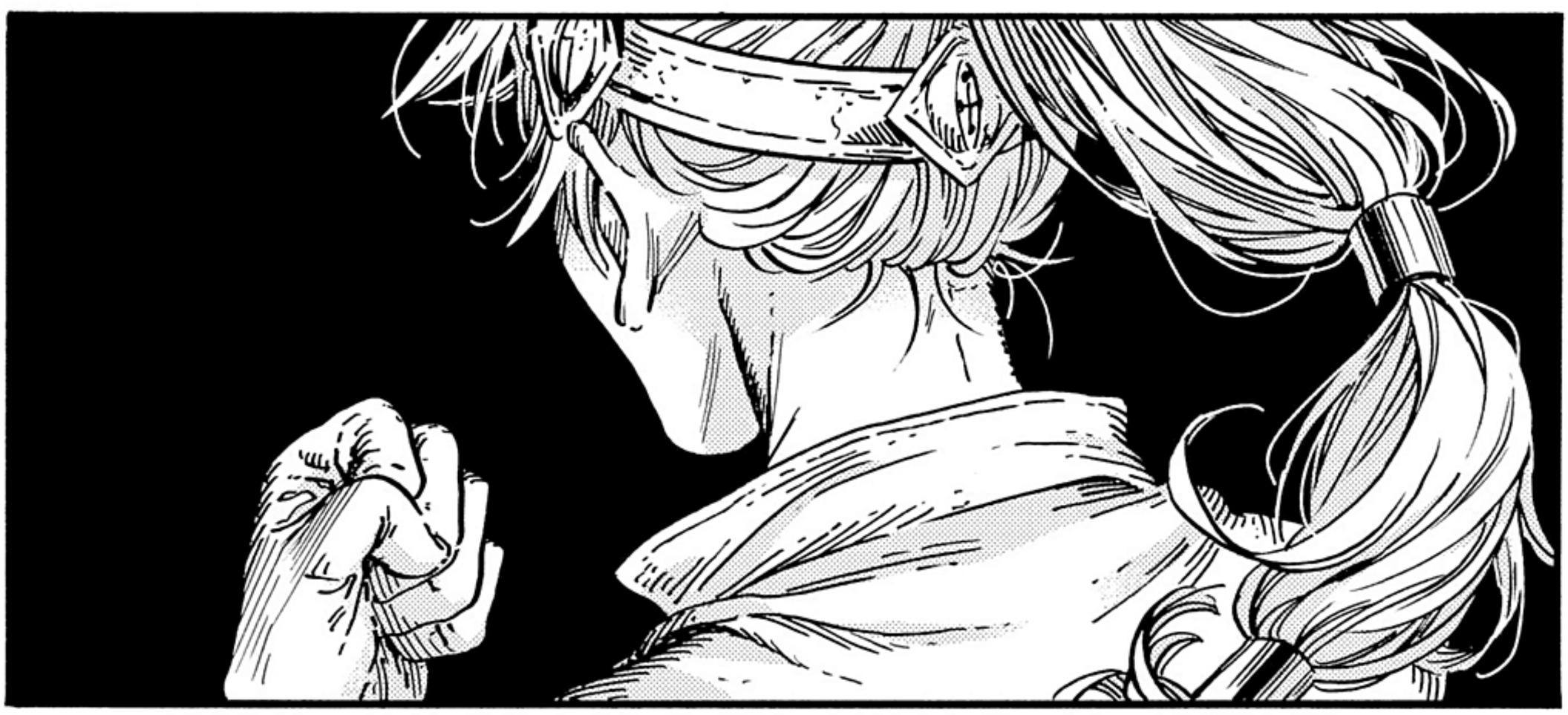
WE'D RUN OUT OF TIME TO FRET ABOUT WHAT THEY'D WITNESS OR HOW THEY'D RESPOND.
SOMETHING HAD TO BE DONE.
FWSH
FWSH


THE PENINSULAR KING IS HERE!

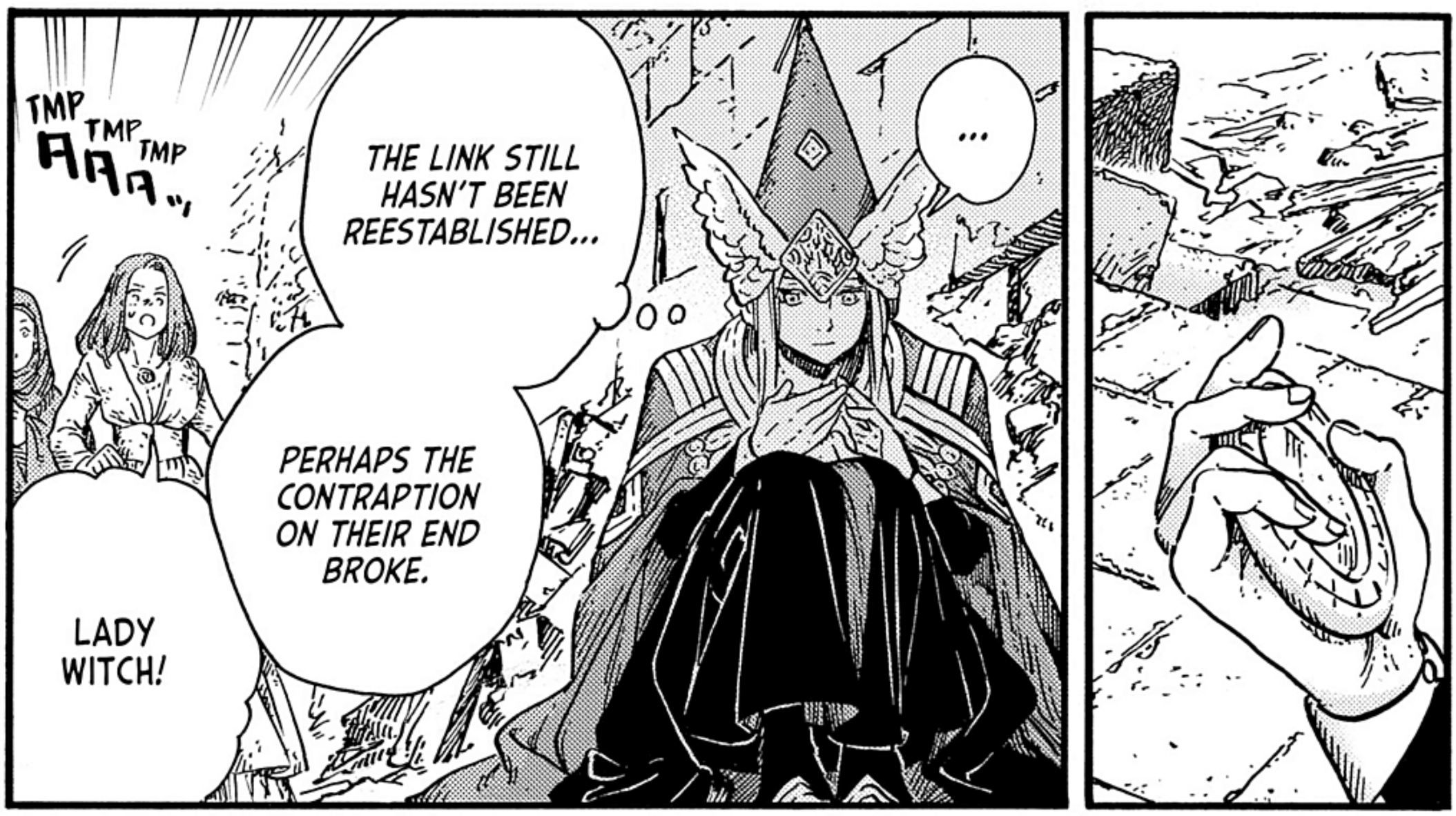
I SHALL SEE EACH AND EVERY ONE RECOVERED IN FULL!
KEEP THEM COMING WITHOUT DELAY!
YES, SIRE!

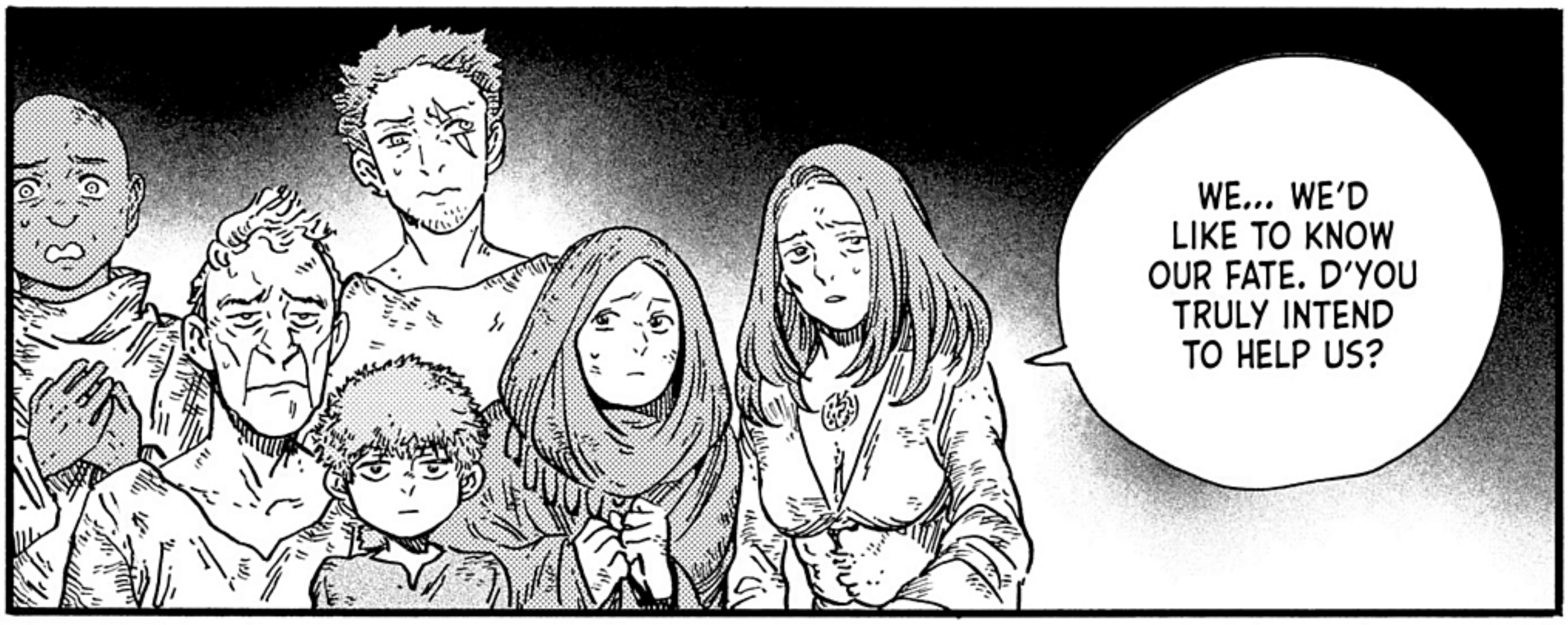

!
BRING IN THE NEXT PATIENT!

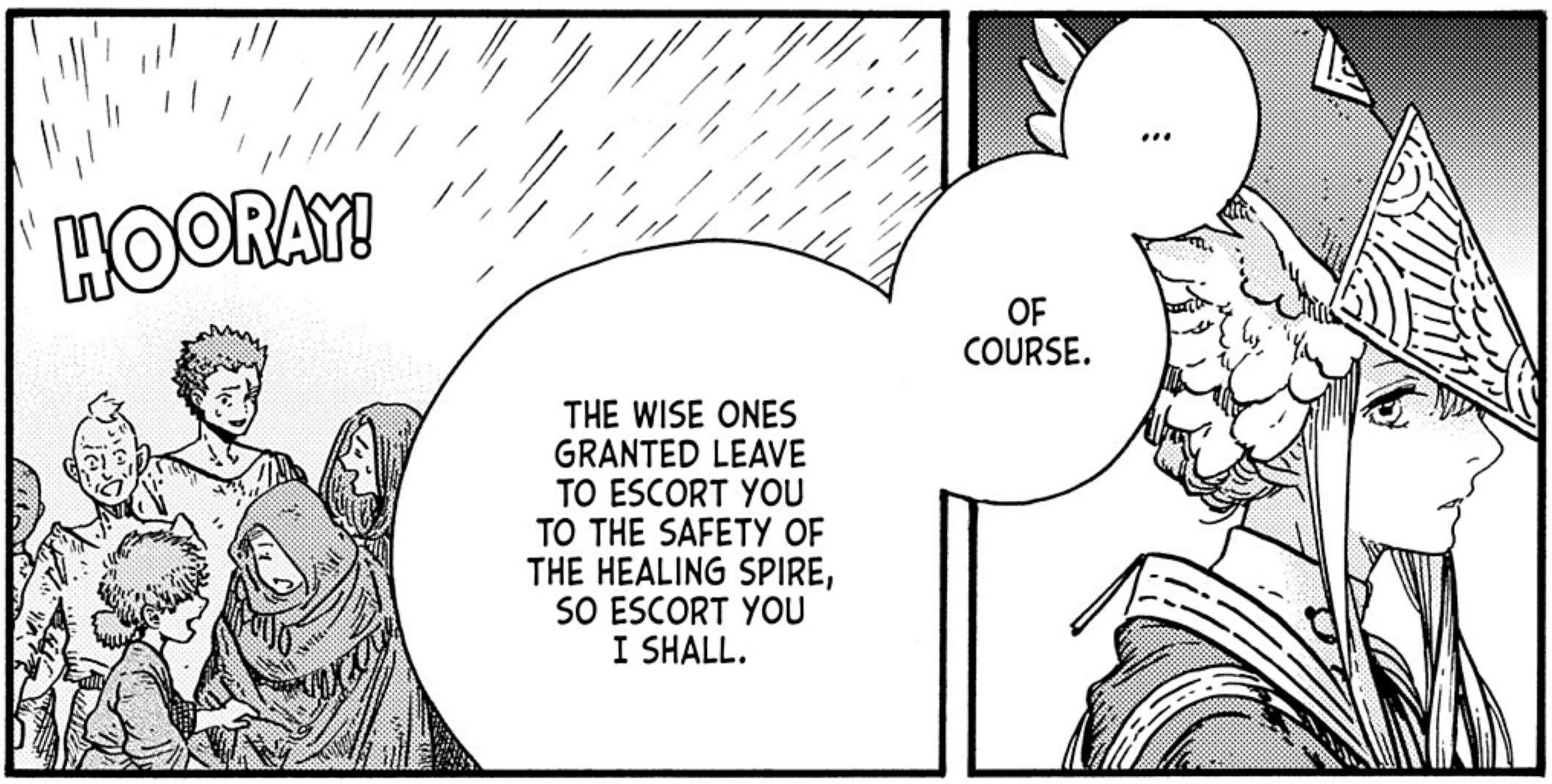

WAIT...!
THAT'S HIM!

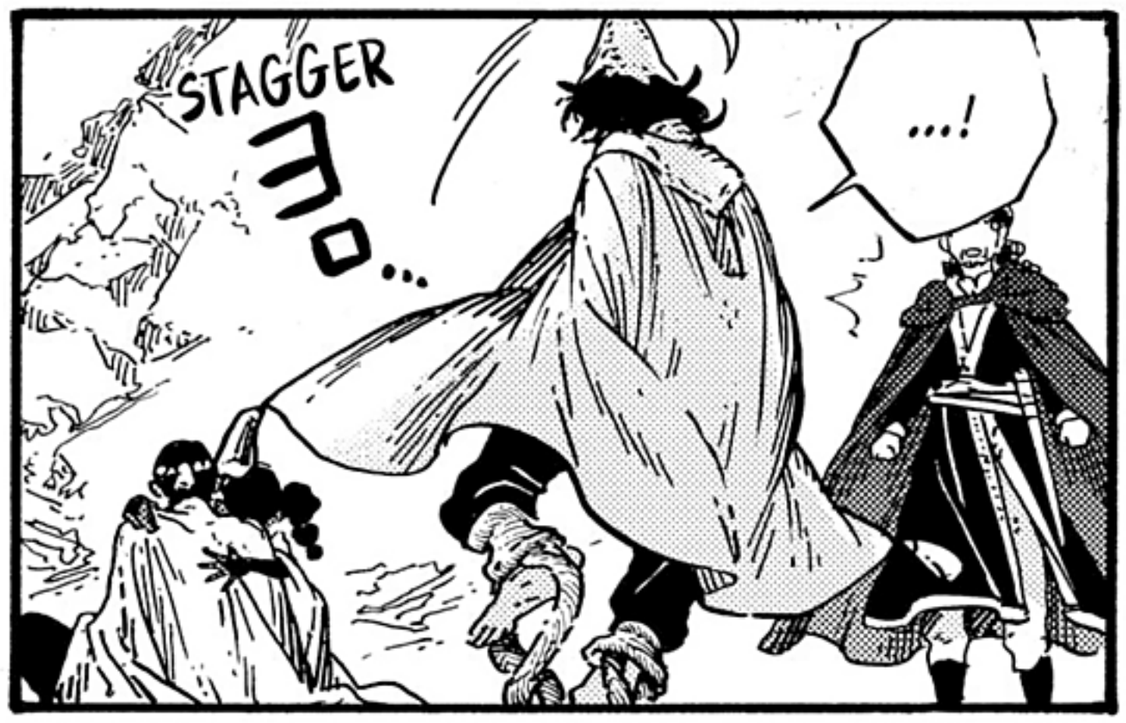


WHY SHOULD THEY REQUIRE ANYONE'S PERMISSION...
...TO WEAR SUCH BRIGHT SMILES?
"...GRANTED LEAVE..."
"...TO SAFETY..."
THE WORDS SOUND EVEN STRANGER WHEN I'M THE ONE TO SAY THEM.
I KNOW WHY THE PRINCIPLES MUST BE UPHELD.
I STUDIED THE ERRORS OF OUR PAST. I KNOW THE DANGER.
YET...
HOW AM I TO OBSERVE THESE DISPLAYS OF JOYOUS RELIEF...
...AND BRAND THEM AS CRIMES OR MISTAKES?


TMP TMP TMP
AAA...
THE LINK STILL HASN'T BEEN REESTABLISHED...
...
PERHAPS THE CONTRAPTION ON THEIR END BROKE.
LADY WITCH!


WE... WE'D LIKE TO KNOW OUR FATE. D'YOU TRULY INTEND TO HELP US?

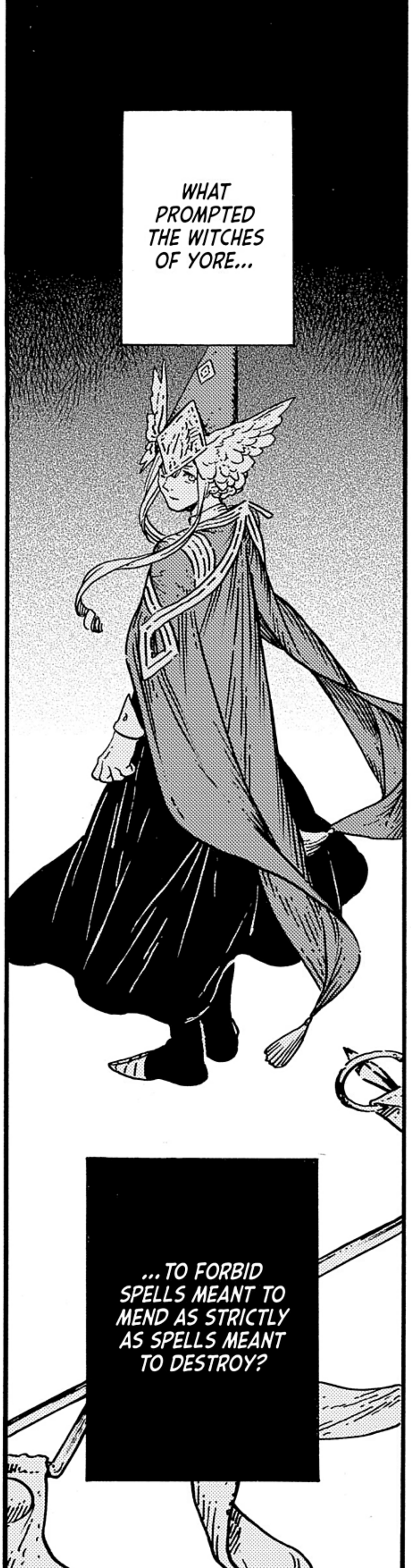

HOORAY!
THE WISE ONES GRANTED LEAVE TO ESCORT YOU TO THE SAFETY OF THE HEALING SPIRE, SO ESCORT YOU I SHALL.
...
OF COURSE.


STAGGER
...!

CUSTAS!
ARE YOUR LEGS IN PAIN?

...AND SAVE THE STORIES FOR LATER.
PERHAPS WE SHOULD HURRY TO THE HEALING SPIRE FIRST...

THEY WEREN'T BOTHERIN' ME BEFORE. WHAT'S WITH THE SUDDEN CHANGE?
WHY DO I FEEL SO...?


WHAT PROMPTED THE WITCHES OF YORE...
...TO FORBID SPELLS MEANT TO MEND AS STRICTLY AS SPELLS MEANT TO DESTROY?

WHY NOW? OF ALL THE TIMES TO...!

SOMETHING'S NOT RIGHT.

CLENCH

GNH ...!

THUD

SO WHY...?

I HAVE TO SPEAK WITH HIM. TO SEE IF HE HAS THE ANSWERS.

I'M CERTAIN THAT'S THE BOY COCO SPOKE OF.

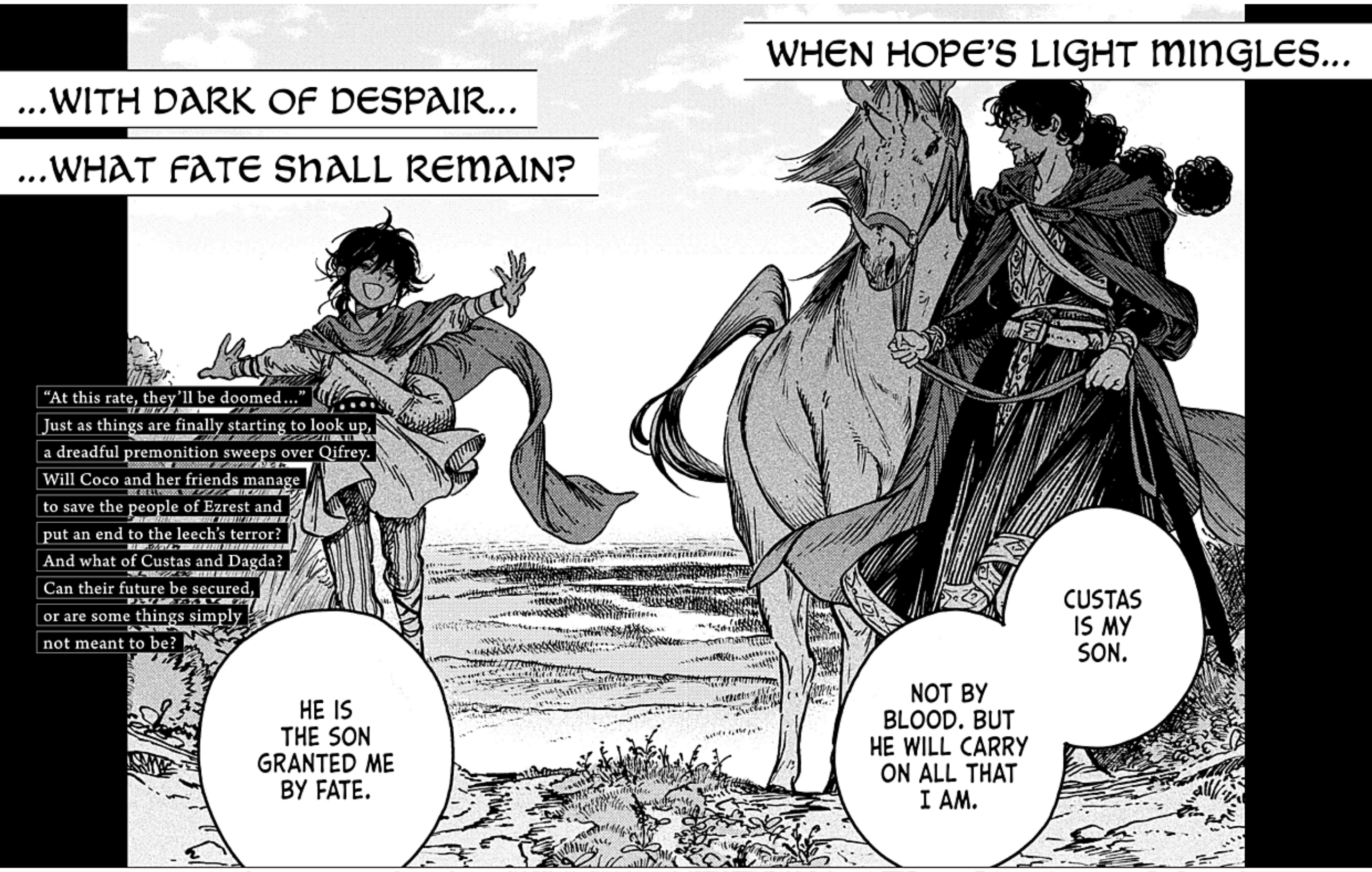
...REFUSING MY ATTEMPTS TO APPROACH?

WHY IS MY BODY REBELLING AGAINST ME...

A WARNING THAT I MUSTN'T DRAW ANY NEARER?
WHO!!
OR IS IT...
...SOME PROTECTIVE INSTINCT?
WHIP!
WAS IT ALWAYS SO FAINT?
HIS EYES...
THEIR COLOR...

I HAVE TO WARN COCO.
SHE NEEDS TO KNOW!
OH, NO... PLEASE DON'T TELL ME...
AT THIS RATE, THEY'LL BE DOOMED...
HER CHANCE TO SAVE THEM WILL VANISH ALTOGETHER!

Witch Hat Atelier



Witch Hat Atelier

VOLUME 14: COMING SOON!!

Wandance

Created by
Coffee

Get up and join the Wandance!

A boy named Kaboku sees a girl named Wanda dance, and suddenly burns with a need to join in. A new, inspirational manga for fans of *Blue Period* and *Your Lie in April*.

RATED: 13+

KODANSHA

READ THE MANGA

KODANSHA.US

Wandance © Coffee/Kodansha Ltd.

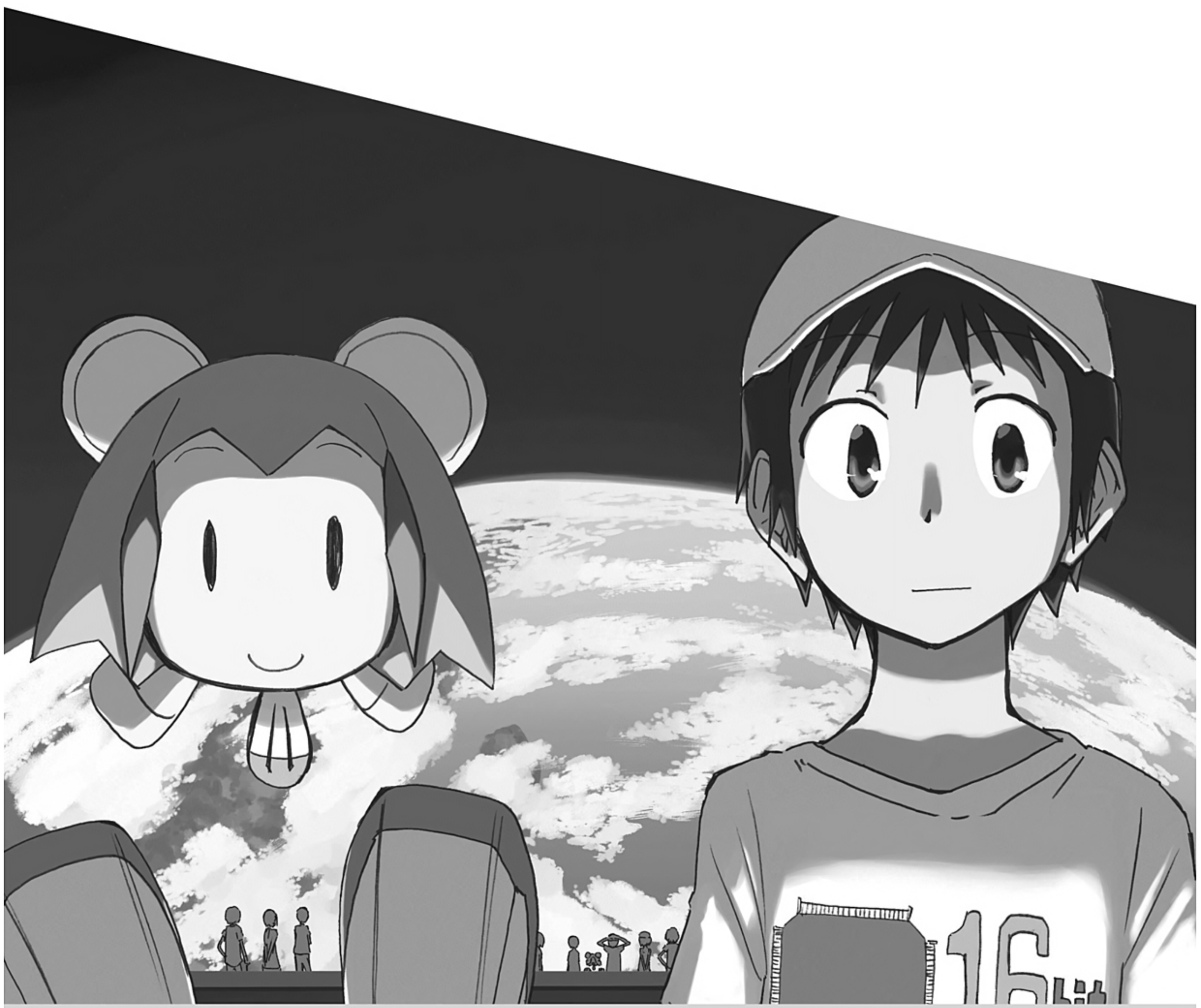
Break of Dawn

Created by
Tetsuya Imai

A coming-of-age sci-fi story

Yuma is obsessed with the impending return of the SHIII-Arville Comet. One day, he sneaks onto the roof of an apartment building and finds something not from this world...

RATED: 13+



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Break of Dawn © Tetsuya Imai/Kodansha Ltd.

A Condition Called Love

Created by
Megumi Morino

"I want to understand love!"

Hotaru is ambivalent about dating. Hananoi-kun is excessively romantic. When Hananoi-kun asks her out, Hotaru decides to give this whole "love" thing a try. Will he manage to win her heart?

RATED: 13+

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A Condition Called Love © Megumi Morino/Kodansha, Ltd.

Shonen Note: Boy Soprano

Created by
Yuhki Kamatani

A moving and musical series from the creator of *Our Dreams at Dusk: Shimanami Tasogare*!

Yutaka is a boy treasured by his choir for his beautiful, soprano voice. But what will he do when the inevitable arrives, and his voice starts to deepen?

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Shonen Note: Boy Soprano © Yuhki Kamatani/Kodansha Ltd.

Quality Assurance in Another World

Created by
Masamichi Sato

Bugs abound in this imperfect world!

Nikola's world is filled with anomalies and Haga, a "Seeker," comes to "debug" the situation. Can it be that your life is nothing like what you thought? Nobody's getting reincarnated here!

RATED: 13+

KODANSHA

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Quality Assurance in Another World © Masamichi Sato/Kodansha Ltd.

Shaman King: Flowers

Created by
Hiroyuki Takei

The bloom of a new era!

The journey continues for the next generation of shamans in this exciting sequel to the best-selling *Shaman King* series!

RATED: 13+

READ THE MANGA

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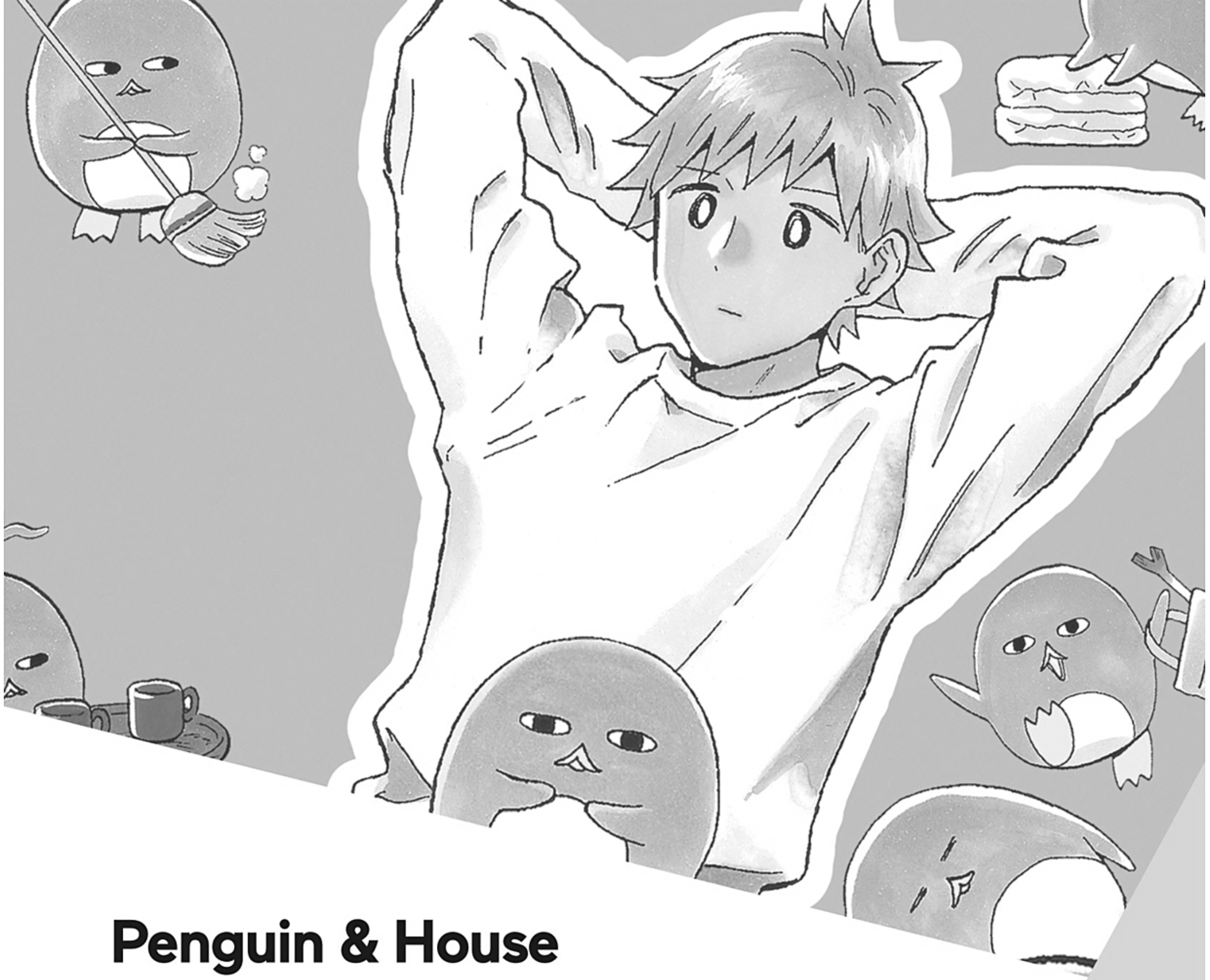
Shaman King Flowers © Hiroyuki Takei/Kodansha Ltd.



Penguin & House

Created by
Akiho Ieda

Pen is a penguin who likes pancakes.

Pen the penguin lives with his friend Hayakawa, a human. The only way for Pen to express his love is by doing chores and getting deals at the supermarket. This is their life together.

RATED: 8+

KODANSHA

READ THE MANGA

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Penguin & House © Akiho Ieda/Kodansha Ltd.

In the Clear Moonlit Dusk

Created by
Mika Yamamori

Push past appearances in this teen romance!

Yoi Takiguchi is resigned to being the hero—not heroine—in her life, until Ichimura-sempai shows her what it feels like to be seen for her true beauty...

RATED: 13+

KODANSHA

READ THE MANGA

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Witch Hat Atelier 13

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